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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

J. R. CAMPBELL — THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCOMES POLICY IN BRITAIN

TED BAKER — SPORT AND CULTURE

HUGH MacDIARMID — HILL FARMING IN SCOTLAND

DISCUSSION:

MAURICE DOBB — INFLATION AND ALL-THAT

A. MUIR — NECESSITY AND CHANCE

JOHN LEWIS, FRANZ LOESER — MARXISM AND MORALITY

BOB WILLIAMSON — TROTSKYISM IN BRITAIN TODAY

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Marxism Today

Vol. 9 No. 3

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Editorial Comments

IN his speech in the censure debate (on February 2nd) Sir Alec Douglas Home advised the Liberals to stop supporting the Labour Party. He got no response whatsoever, for the Liberals had done this on two occasions between the wars and had almost completely wrecked their own party. These occasions are dealt with in Mr. David Thomson's *England in the Twentieth Century* (Pelican Edition 5s.).

In October 1924 the Liberals decided to support a Conservative censure motion against the Labour Party on their handling of the Campbell case. But let Mr. Thomson remind us what happened in the subsequent election:

> "Labour lost 40 seats. But again, as in 1923, the electoral system gravely distorted the shift of opinion and the crucial factor was the decline in Liberal votes. Labour gained 33 per cent of the poll and well over a million votes. The true picture is that both parties gained in votes, and even seats at the expense of the Liberals. *It was the Liberals, dropping sharply from 159 to 40 seats who were permanently affected.* Hence they became decisively the third party in the state." [Our italics]

In this election, according to Mr. Thomson, a big anti-Communist scare was worked up around the so-called Zinoviev letter. "The opposition and much of the Press seized on it avidly, presented it hysterically, and showed little political scruple or sense of responsibility." There were Conservative leaflets which asserted "there are many Communists today in our so-called 'Labour Party' and so strong are they that our Socialist Government must do their bidding". In spite of all this the Labour Party in 1924 gained a million votes. Working class electors were not scared.

In 1931 the Liberals joined with the Conservatives in pressing the Labour Government to cut unemployed benefit. When that Government resigned, the Liberals gladly joined the so-called National Government headed by Ramsay MacDonald. In the subsequent General Election—

> "The vote for the Conservatives went up by more than 3 million as compared with 1929; the Liberal vote declined by roughly the same number. Labour lost some 1¾ million votes and mustered only 52 seats. The crisis split both the Labour and Liberal Parties, 'National Labourites', and 'Liberal Nationals' becoming distinct from the old parties. But whereas the result marked yet another milestone in the disintegration and downhill trend of the Liberal Party, the bulk of Labour went into opposition with only a handful of its parliamentary leaders back in the House."

No wonder Jo Grimond is not yet rushing in to aid the Tories and commit political suicide.

Defence Roundabout

Incidentally, Mr. Thomson, who is very much a middle-of-the-road historian, has some remarks on defence expenditure which might with advantage be pondered by Mr. Harold Wilson.

> "During the Macmillan government, not even the most thrifty Chancellor of the Exchequer could economise on defence expenditures, though lavish expense repeatedly failed to purchase adequate defences. For this reason Ministers of Defence changed with nearly the same frequency as Chancellors.
>
> "Mr. Sandys succeeded Mr. Head in 1957, to be replaced by Mr. Watkinson in 1959, and he, in turn, by Mr. Thorneycroft in 1962. The policy of seeking to provide an independent nuclear deterrent (that is, one that is capable of being delivered by Britain without U.S. help) led to expenditure and research on developing the 'Blue Streak' missile. In April 1960 the project was abandoned. Two months later Watkinson announced that agreement had been reached with the United States about the production of 'Skybolt'. . . . At the end of 1962 the Americans proposed that further work on 'Skybolt' should be ended. . . . It was agreed that 'Skybolt' should be abandoned but that Polaris missiles would be made available for British submarines . . . Britain's defence expenditure for 1963 exceeded £1,837 million (the actual figure for the previous year having been £1,777 million)."

Now Mr. Wilson wants nuclear bombs to be retained by Britain in order to frighten the Chinese. The wasteful, dangerous, tragic farce goes on.

Food Shortage Replaces Surplus

For many years, the Communist Party has been alone in insisting that a sound policy for British agriculture must and can only be based on increasing production. A contracting industry cannot be a prosperous one, either for farmers or farm workers. The idea has been largely ignored; and when it has received support, it has always been sidestepped. References have been made to the known fact that between the half of the world's population which is known not to get enough to eat and the producers whose main need is to produce more and be adequately paid for it, is a barrier composed of "surplus"

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food which capitalism cannot market. The amount of surplus is small in relation to the peoples' need, but effective in preventing capitalist governments embarking on policies of stimulating production.

According to the Editorial in the *Farmers Weekly* (January 1st, 1965), there is taking place a dramatic change in this situation. It speaks of:

> ". . . the sudden shift which has taken place in the world demand for, and trade in, food. It seems only yesterday that the whole of the western world was worrying over ever-growing surpluses. Today, most of those surpluses have disappeared, and supplies of some commodities on world markets are running short. All the signs are that this trend will go on."

It instances the facts that Italy cannot now get enough beef; Japan is turning away from fish and has become a big importer of meat, milk and eggs; Britain is "scouring" the world for butter; France has stopped dumping dried milk and is shopping around the world for it. Canada and Holland are finding difficulty in fulfilling their export commitments. This list, it will be noted, ignores the much vaster problem of proper diet for the newly emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In this situation the Communist Party is a thousand times right in pressing its demand for our well equipped and scientific agriculture to be given the opportunity and encouragement to produce every ounce of food it can—with all the requisite security and stability which it needs and proper living standards for the workers employed in it.

The Russian Hamlet

Once one has got used to the loss of Shakespeare's actual words it becomes clear that this is a superb film and a brilliant interpretation of one of the world's great plays. Apart from the language it has Olivier's *Hamlet* film beaten hands down. Here Elsinore is offered us not as a cloudy fortress remote from human reality but as the centre of a rich but rickety society entirely convincing as a representation of sixteenth-century Denmark. The key to the play becomes the rottenness in the state. The Prince is no neurotic but an exceptionally intelligent, honest and likeable young man faced with an intolerable situation. Such touches of symbolism as the director permits himself—like Ophelia's steel stays—are firmly in period and completely right in their implications. Of course everyone will have his quibbles—why so dull and middle-aged a Horatio? Why take Hamlet implausibly out of the castle to die?—but these are nothing. What matters is the general spirit of the film, which, like Shostakovitch's music, is impressive without being at all stuffy, and the splendid unexaggerated performance of Innokenti Smoktunovsky who, without playing for "contemporary" effects, strikes surely at the modern quality of the most modern of Shakespeare's heroes. The *Times* film critic has announced with relief that this is not a "Marxist" interpretation of the play. Presumably he means by this that *Hamlet* has not been distorted for propagandist purposes. In fact Kozintsev's interpretation is entirely and splendidly Marxist, a fact which emerges most importantly when one compares it, in terms of historical accuracy, psychological plausibility, vitality and consistency of total effect, with any production of the play seen in Britain for a good many years.

T. S. Eliot

It is not easy to arrive at an objective estimate of the value of the work of T. S. Eliot. That many of his basic opinions and attitudes were not merely conservative but positively reactionary is obvious, and he made no secret of it. It would be hard to find a more unmitigatedly reactionary collection of ideas within a highly literate framework than his *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture* or *The Idea of a Christian Society*. He was anti-humanist, anti-democratic and (despite his occasional championing of *avant garde* work with which he was in some respects quite out of sympathy) illiberal. His conception of culture was élitist. His literary criticism

1965

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was, by and large, an elaborate attempt to play down human history in favour of the far less potent concept of "tradition". His religion had nothing in common with the religion of a Milton or a Blake: it was the non-revolutionary and non-materialist parts of the Christian tradition that he fastened on to, and the keynote of the *Four Quartets* is a sense of mystical submission. In his plays what he seems chiefly interested in is not any sort of action but the transmission of a "sense of sin" in which action is relatively unimportant, an attitude curiously at variance with the needs of drama which is inevitably the representation of action.

And yet T. S. Eliot was, at the same time, and especially in his early work, a fine, perhaps even a great poet. Not that his achievement or his influence were ever, even in isolably literary terms, wholly good. The excessive allusiveness, the over-sophisticated search for a "distinction" of tone, the use (especially in the later poems) of symbols of an essentially abstract significance, such characteristics have had a restrictive effect on the development of modern poetry. Yet there can be no doubt that there was also a liberation. Not merely did Eliot cut through an enormous amount of bogus feeling and false rhetoric within the neo-romantic poetry of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, he struck chords that were genuinely and marvellously contemporary. To come upon *Prufrock* or the *Preludes* or *Gerontion* —even *The Waste Land* or *The Hollow Men*—is, even forty years later, to be introduced into a new and exciting language of poetry. Phrases from these poems, once absorbed, haunt the mind and re-echo through the consciousness, letting us see things we had not seen before, clarifying and liberating not only our own use of language but the way we live. "*I have measured out my life with coffee spoons*," "*Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians*," "*I will show you fear in a handful of dust.*"

The Marxist cannot be content with merely recording the contradiction between Eliot the experimental poet and Eliot the reactionary publicist. What is the relation between the two? Is it simply (as it is no doubt partly), a matter of the former being gradually replaced, as time went on, by the latter? Not entirely, for even in the early poetry there are ominous shadows and within the *Four Quartets* some incomparable moments. Even an impossibly awful play like *The Cocktail Party* is, as an exercise in versification, extremely impressive. But we cannot be content to make an artificial distinction between form and content and pronounce T. S. Eliot an accomplished literary technician. It is not the technique that gives the early poetry its value. It is the expression of real and tough insights into actual aspects of twentieth-century life in strong and vital terms. That is there and, though the negative elements—the snobbery, the complacencies deep within a surface of non-complacency, the straight lack of real humanity—all the time tend to undermine it, nothing can quite take it away.

The Internationale

The hundredth anniversary of the First International has been marked not only by meetings, celebrations, exhibitions—numerous and world wide though all these have been. It has inspired a wealth of Marxist writing directed to estimating the significance of the International for the struggle for socialism today.

Among such contributions, R. P. Dutt's new book —*The Internationale*, Lawrence & Wishart, 36s., must undoubtedly rank very high. It is much more than a detailed history of the First International (although in Chapter 3, the reader will find treated everything of importance about the International). What is so valuable is that the International is treated in truly Marxist historical fashion. It is shown in a living fashion as a political organisation which arose out of previous political development but which, by its own existence, activity and struggle, laid the foundation for mighty advances in the future.

The Internationale therefore deals not only or even mainly with the First International. It spans over two centuries of struggle for democracy and socialism.

These are the foundation, achievements and weaknesses of the Second International (1889-1914), the first world war which saw its collapse, the split in the international Labour movement, and the foundation of the Third, Communist International.

Nearly two-thirds of the book are devoted to discussing first, the strategy, tactics and activities of the Communist International at all the key moments in the stormy years of its existence. Second, the results of the second world war as reflected in the rise of a powerful world system of socialism and the great advance of the national liberation struggle against imperialism. Third, the new problems facing the world Communist movement and the socialist countries arising from the second world war and the "cold war". Here the profound significance of the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. is dealt with, as well as those of the 1957 and 1960 Conferences of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the world.

The book is written with all the scholarship and close attention to significant detail which are the hallmark of R. P. Dutt's writings. In it he has given to all active in the struggle for socialism not only a living history of that struggle over more than a hundred years, but a splendid re-statement of basic Marxist principles.

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The Communist Solution

The "hundred days of dynamic action" have come and gone, but the most difficult problems have not been resolved. This gives added importance to the Communist Party's broadsheet, *Britain's Crisis—the Communist Solution.* It is a lively publication, in two colours, with illustrations, diagrams and cartoons, covering the major problems facing the Labour Government and the people. Britain's balance of payments problem, which is likely to remain with us so long as imperialist interests dominate our foreign and colonial policy, is dealt with clearly; and so is the so-called "incomes policy", which has also survived the change of government.

Britain's Crisis does not however only show what is wrong—it also puts forward the policies which can put things right and which are being more and more pressed on the Government by the Labour movement.

A Study of Apartheid

There are many ways of exerting pressure on the South African Government to prevent the full implementation of the infamous policy of apartheid. There may be some disagreement even among those who disapprove of this policy as to what are the most suitable methods to adopt in combating this evil; but it will be generally agreed that the more knowledge we possess of what apartheid actually is, the more effective will be our reaction to it. Mr. Solly Sachs, in his book *The Anatomy of Apartheid* (recently published by Collet's at 45*s.*), analyses the history of this "Master and Servant" society, showing its colonialist basis, how its unchanging aim has been the maximum exploitation of the native African, and how, in spite of the astronomical profits abstracted from minerals and farming, the average white settler is himself exploited, while the economy of the country remains backward. The author shows how, if the whole population was enabled to work effectively, South Africa could lead the whole continent forward towards human happiness. Only apartheid stands in the way.

Morals, the Family, Society

Those who read the article on *Marxism and Morality* by Martin Milligan in our January issue will be interested to know that *Nouvelle Critique*, "monthly journal of militant Marxism" published under the aegis of the French Communist Party, devoted a good part of last November's number to similar questions.

It contained two long articles—one by Roger Garaudy, the Marxist philosopher, *On the Basis of Morals*, and the other by Jeannette Colombel on *Is there a Marxist Morality?*

The latter article was specially written for the journal. Garaudy's was based on a report that he gave at the International Seminar on the subject held at the Gramsci Institute in Rome early last year. "The study of the laws of social development," he writes at the beginning of his study, "and even the possibility of foreseeing, at least in general outline, the more or less probable development of things in the near or distant future, does not allow us to dispense at any moment with the acceptance of our responsibility as active *subjects* and creators of our own history, and not through some approach which would reduce us to the result or sum of the conditions of our existence, as the *objects* of history."

Another discussion was organised by the Gramsci Institute (May 1964), this time with only Italian participation, on *Marxist Conceptions of the Relation between Family and Society.* Papers were read on the general problem, on the history of theories for reforming the family—state relationship, on the Soviet experience—on parent-children relationships, husband-wife relationship, and on the legal aspects of the problem.

The whole Seminar with reports, discussion and summing up, along with a useful Bibliography has been published in a special supplement by our colleagues *Critica Marxista*, the theoretical organ of the Italian Communist Party.

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The Development of Incomes Policy in Britain

J. R. Campbell

WE have now reached a stage in the struggle around incomes policy when it is useful to survey the field and to evaluate the Labour Government's contribution to this question.

Historically the clamour for a national wages policy, or a national incomes policy, only emerges when there is a high level of employment which is expected to last. Previously the capitalists were content to leave the fixing of wages to collective bargaining, which was of course influenced by the state of the labour market. Where the unions were weak they got poor and belated increases through wage boards or wages councils. In times of relatively good trade, the unions pressed forward for increases of wages, and prevented the employers from pushing them down to their former level when a slump came. So over the whole field of industry there was gradually built up, in each occupation, an accepted standard of life, that the workers were prepared stubbornly to defend and to improve wherever the opportunity offered. They had but few opportunities for improvements between the wars, when the existence of a large unemployed army hampered the wages movement. Improvements in wages and conditions were often the result not of national negotiation but of factory bargaining on incentive wages. The workers in relatively prosperous areas like London, could obtain by factory and local pressure what could never be obtained by national negotiations.

Where the workers in a given industry or craft stood on the league table of wages was not decided by any criteria based on social justice, but by the state of the market for different types of labour, and the strength of the unions and the factory organisations. There was no question of an annual or even biennial wages increase in such circumstances. Wage increases were few and far between and the capitalists on the whole were content with this system. It was only with the emergence of a high level of employment after the last war that the capitalists became favourable to policies which aimed at restraining the wages movement of the workers, while leaving the employers free to push up their profits to the maximum possible extent.

Birth of a Policy

Academic economists and Fabian theorists generally began in these circumstances to advocate a national wages policy whose main objects were (1) to prevent wages from rising faster than productivity, and (2) to secure justice between various sections of workers, by rationalising the wage structure between industries, and between the various groups of workers within an industry. A typical expression of this attitude was embodied in a resolution moved at the Labour Party conference in 1947 by the Rushcliffe Divisional Labour Party, which declared that action against inflation and to secure the proper distribution of manpower must include:

> "A comprehensive policy on wages, hours, and the distribution of national income and urges H.M. Government to formulate such a policy".

A declaration "that a national policy on wages is unjust and impracticable, unless at the same time purchasing power derived from excessive profits, unearned incomes and capital appreciation is greatly reduced, and therefore urges H.M. Government, as the first step in this policy, to steadily bring about such a reduction while at the same time preventing undue hardship to individuals".

Though this resolution sought to palliate state wage fixing, with the fixing of profits, it was opposed by most of the unions and right wing leaders like Arthur Deakin and Tom Williamson, spoke vehemently against it. Deakin asked:

> "Do we want a wages policy that attempts by declaration to determine what is the right wage in a particular industry? Are we seeking to set out the order in which wage policy shall be applied to industry? If you accept this policy then you will rue it. . . . You will have such strife within your ranks that no power can restrain the demand for wages and the production of those conditions which will result in inflation."

Tom Williamson asserted that

> "it is suggested in this resolution that all the trade unions should be displaced by the Government. Instead of the workers being in conflict with private

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employers you are going to bring them into conflict with the Government."

Although there was an element of misrepresentation of the resolution in Mr. Williamson's remarks the Union leaders were correct in emphasising that the form of national wages policy that was being advocated (1) would interfere with collective bargaining, and (2) that any attempt to favour one union against another with regard to its place on the wages league table would set the unions at each other's throats. These arguments are still relevant to some of the suggestions for an incomes policy being put forward in the unions today.

Cripps's Freeze

In less than a year however, Mr. Deakin had changed his mind with regard to a wages policy. For in February 1948 the Government had issued a "Statement on Incomes, Costs and Prices" which said that "there was no justification for any *general* increase in individual money incomes". In return the Government gave a promise to do its utmost to stabilise the cost of living (it was spending a great deal on food subsidies at this time) and to prevent profits from rising unduly. The right wing leaders declared that as this policy left wages to be fixed by collective bargaining it was acceptable, and a conference of Trade Union Executives gave its support.

From the point of view of holding down wages this policy was an initial success only to collapse catastrophically. In 1948 the wage rates of all workers increased by 4 per cent as compared with a cost of living increase of slightly under 5 per cent; in 1949 the wage rates of all workers increased by 2 per cent, against a cost of living increase of 4 per cent; in 1950 they increased by approximately 5 per cent as against a cost of living increase of 3 per cent. In September 1950 the Trades Union Congress however repudiated the wages freeze. In 1951 wage rates increased by 10 per cent while the cost of living increased by over 11 per cent. The Labour Government's essay in the control of incomes, costs and prices was dead. There were a variety of causes, the basic one being the Government's failure to control the rise in prices. The pound was devalued in September 1949, and the conditions for a gradual rise in prices were created. The stockpiling which followed the Korean war (1950) gave a further impetus to price rises and the workers pressed forward with higher than usual demands for increased wages. With that experience in mind, the unions should beware this line of agreeing to a wage freeze, on the basis of a vague promise by Government and employers to control price rises.

Contrary to Labour expectations the Tories, when they came back in 1951, did not attempt to revive the wages freeze nor to resist the attempts of the unions to push up wages. There were two reasons—economic and political. In 1952 the economic situation of Britain took a sharp turn for the better as world prices of food and raw materials declined sharply. The balance of payments began to improve. Further, the Tories began to release resources by cutting the grossly inflated arms programme of the Labour Party. The position of British exports in the world market had been improved by devaluation. So concessions could be made. The Government operating on a narrow majority had to conciliate the workers in the hope that some of them could be detached from the Labour Party. Sir Walter Monckton at the Ministry of Labour, set out to charm the right wing trade union bureaucracy. So wage concessions were given, and dividends were permitted to rise. The "free for all" was on. In addition the Tories began to cut income tax, some of the better paid workers benefiting from this.

As far as the Tories at this period had any wages policy at all it was to operate credit squeezes, restrict hire purchase advances and frighten the trade unions with small increases in unemployment. There were the usual ponderous Treasury statements about the need to limit the increases in wages and profits. Mr. Macmillan, who was Chancellor in 1956, announced that prices were ceasing to rise. They were on a plateau and he hoped they would remain there. He tried to get declarations from the nationalised industries and from large firms, that they did not intend to increase their prices in the period immediately ahead. So Mr. George Brown today is not so very original.

Not So Wise Men

The Chancellor of the Exchequer who followed Macmillan, Peter Thorneycroft, tried a tougher line. He appointed a Council on Prices, Productivity and Incomes, known popularly as the three wise men, to find a policy. The Council reported that rising prices, wages and profits, were caused by excess demand; that the Government should cut public expenditure, thereby reducing demand, and that this policy would operate best in conditions where there was more unemployment than had been usual in Britain in the recent past. In short, create more unemployment and there will be little need for the Government to take any direct action against wages. Unfortunately for Mr. Thorneycroft, the Prime Minister Harold Macmillan shrank back from the full implications of this policy, refusing to cut social service or other Government expenditure to the necessary extent. So Mr. Thorneycroft resigned. But his other measures did have an effect on unemployment, which rose to the high level of 666,509

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in January 1959. This policy had its effect on wage rates, which advanced at a much lower rate than previous years. Thus the net increase in basic weekly rates of wages was £5,340,000 per week in 1957, £3,461,000 per week in 1958, £1,251,000 in 1959, and a recovery to £4,116,000 per week in 1960.

There was however another result which was less welcome to the Government and the employers, namely that the stop-go policy was producing stagnation in British industrial production, while the output of Britain's European competitors was rapidly increasing. Bourgeois economists began to ask what useful purpose was really being served by a policy which, while holding back the growth of wages, also held back the growth of production and profits. Would it not be possible to restrict wage advances without restricting the growth of profits they asked.

Government Wages Fixing

An answer to this was provided by the notorious report on "The Problem of Rising Prices" published by the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (now the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1961, which alleged that rising prices were mainly due to continual increases in wages and that Governments could not allow this to go on. The report emphasised that Governments must have an idea of how wages should be allowed to advance in a given situation, and should make their views known to employers and unions, bringing pressure to bear on them to conform to this in all wage negotiations. The report further emphasised that

> "an essential way in which the Government should contribute to effective wages policy was by having a wages policy for employees in the public sector".

In short we were back to the tactic of the Government imposing some kind of wages policy on the trade unions.

In dealing with the balance of payments crisis in 1961 the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Selwyn Lloyd) produced a mixture of the old "stop-go policy" and of the O.E.E.C. policy which recommended that the Government seek to impose wage restraint on the unions. In July 1961 there was the usual emergency budget and credit squeeze operating to slow down the economy, accompanied by fierce propaganda against wage increases. In particular the Government operated the recommendation to interfere in the fixing of wages as far as the public sector was concerned by decreeing a wages and salaries pause for workers in Government service.

It succeeded in provoking a storm. For the whole tendency since the war was for the workers in national and local services to lag behind those in industry. In any wages round they were invariably last in the queue. They were there in 1961 when the Chancellor proclaimed a wage pause, as far as the workers in Government service were concerned. The result was inevitable. The unions in the public services exploded in indignation and there were fierce denunciations of Government policy from workers, many of whom had been among the Government's supporters in the 1959 election. The Government was correctly accused of undermining the arbitration machinery for fixing the wages and salaries of its own workers. The indignation was such that when Mr. Selwyn Lloyd set up the National Incomes Commission the Trades Union Congress refused to participate in it. Yet in 1965 the T.U.C. is clearly preparing to participate in a similar institution now being set up under the auspices of the Labour Government.

The aims of Nicky were (1) to define the percentage—"the guiding light"—by which wages should be allowed to rise in any given year, (2) to examine and evaluate wage and price increases which had taken place, (3) to adjudicate with regard to unions who were claiming that theirs was a special problem and they ought to get a larger increase in wages than was allowed for by the guiding light. The Government let it be known that in its opinion "the guiding light" would allow for wages rising by around 2½ per cent per annum.

The Trades Union Congress refusal to co-operate destroyed the effectiveness of Nicky from the Government point of view, though this body was encouraged to comment on recent wage settlements and to advocate Government wage policy.

Events were soon to prove that the T.U.C.'s refusal to co-operate in Nicky was not due to any basic opposition to the Government's declared policy to restrain wage increases, for when the National Economic Development Council was formed to promote economic growth the General Council of the Trades Union Congress after some initial hesitation joined it. Yet Neddy no less than Nicky was to formulate a "guiding light" to which wage negotiations were expected to conform. The difference, T.U.C. spokesmen alleged, was that Nicky's guiding light was based on the *actual* level of production that was being achieved at the moment whereas Neddy's was based on the *potential* level of production, i.e. a level that could be attained if a policy of stimulating economic growth by planning was adopted. T.U.C. spokesmen disingenuously explained that the Nicky policy was one of "wages restraint", while the Neddy policy was one of "planned growth of wages". The difference was not great, Nicky's guiding light being 2½ per cent and Neddy's guiding light being 3½ per cent. It was admitted by Neddy that adherence to this "guiding

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light" as far as wages was concerned would lead to profits increasing faster than wages and salaries and that steps would have to be taken to correct this by taxation or by some other methods. What was being pursued, Neddy's supporters argued, was not a wages policy but an incomes policy—a policy which would keep prices and profits under control as well as wages. When, however, in the spring of 1964 an attempt was made to spell out how control of prices and profits could be operated it failed. The employers and the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer (Reginald Maudling) had no doubt that a guiding light was feasible with regard to wages but strongly disagreed as to how it could be applied to prices and profits. The contention of the Left that an incomes policy would be mainly concerned with restraining wages and salaries appeared to be confirmed by events.

The Guiding Light

The Neddy guiding light, it should be remembered, was based on the assumption that industrial production would grow at the rate of 4 per cent per annum. In fact industrial production in 1964 grew at a rate of slightly less than 3 per cent. The projected increase of production on which the Neddy policy (under the Tories) was based has not materialised. In fact apart from exhortations nothing had yet been done to get the increased production on which the Neddy policy was based. It was not so much a programme (or plan) as an exercise in stargazing.

Since the General Election some of the so-called planning functions of Neddy have been taken over by the new Department of Economic Affairs. It is the Minister in charge of this Department, Mr. George Brown, who succeeded in extracting a "Joint Statement of Intent" from the employers and the unions, mainly because he has put aside for further consideration many of the questions on which the unions and the employers failed to agree during the period of the previous Government. The "Joint Statement of Intent on Productivity, Prices and Incomes" (to give the full title) is full of window dressing statements that the Government will sometime in the future introduce "earnings-related benefits" and proposals for severance pay and industrial training. These have no necessary relation with an incomes policy. They are operated in countries which do not operate an incomes policy.

The essential part of the Statement is the acceptance of "major objectives of national policy" by the Trades Union Congress and the employers' organisations. Those major objectives are:

> "to ensure that British industry is dynamic and its prices competitive",
>
> "to raise productivity and efficiency so that real national output can increase and to keep increasing wages, salaries and other forms of income in line with this increase",
>
> "to keep the general level of prices stable."
>
> "We therefore undertake on behalf of our members to encourage and lead a sustained attack on the obstacles to efficiency, whether on the part of management or of workers, and to strive for the adoption of more rigorous standards of performance at all levels; to co-operate with the Government in endeavouring in the face of practical problems to give effect to the machinery that the Government intend to establish for the following purposes:
>
> "(i) to keep under review the general movement of prices or of wages, salaries and other money incomes of all kinds;
>
> "(ii) to examine particular cases in order to advise whether or not the behaviour of prices, or of wages and salaries and other money incomes is in the national interest, as defined by the Government after consultation with management and unions.
>
> "We will stress that close attention must be paid to easing the difficulties of those affected by changed circumstances on their employment. We therefore support, in principle, the Government's proposals for earnings-related benefits and will examine sympathetically proposals for severance payments."

The entire Statement, with the exception of one paragraph which we will call attention to later, contains nothing but the generalities which were agreed to when the National Economic Development Council was formed two years ago. There is no sign of any advance to the solution of any of the problems connected with the control of prices and profits as part of an incomes policy. The only departure from Neddy principles is contained in the subparagraph of paragraph 10 which refers to cooperation with the Government in setting up machinery to review "the general movement of prices and money incomes of all kinds".

What is suggested here, and it is virtually the only concrete suggestion in the whole Statement, is that a body similar to the National Incomes Commission of 1961 is being set up with exactly the same objects. The Trades Union Congress has swallowed this, hook, line and sinker.

This is a totally retrogressive step and the unions will regret that the T.U.C. gave its assent to it.

The "Tribune" Article

In the *Tribune* Messrs. Michael Barratt-Brown and Royden Harrison say that the "Declaration" is an advance compared with previous statements. We reject this and will make our position clear by discussing the points raised by these gentlemen.

> "It presents the incomes policy as an element in a plan for the economy as a whole."

That is exactly what Neddy (with Maudling in

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the Chair) alleged that it was doing. But no concrete plan ever emerged and none has as yet been put forward (we agree that it is a bit early) by the Labour Government.

> "It is a policy for all incomes and not merely for wages and salaries."

That is exactly what was claimed for the old Neddy policy. The trouble was that Neddy had a very concrete policy with regard to wages—"the guiding light"—but had no concrete policy for prices and profits. Neither has the Department for Economic Affairs up to date.

> "It acknowledges that an incomes policy must not be seen merely as an instrument for combating inflation but also as a way of 'serving social need and justice'."

Not exactly. That is what the Government says is the object of an incomes policy, but in the part of the document in which the employers and the T.U.C. say what they have accepted, which we have quoted above, there is no mention of social justice. The employers have accepted no such concept.

> "By making it a joint responsibility of management and the unions to attack the obstacles to efficiency whether on the part of the management or the workers, it opens the way especially at the enterprise level to a major challenge to management prerogatives."

This is reading into the document something that is not there. There is no "joint responsibility of management and unions". Both agree to further certain objectives but there is no agreement that the ways and means of achieving them must be a joint responsibility, i.e. must depend on prior agreement between management and unions. There is not the slightest ground for assuming that what have hitherto been regarded as managerial prerogatives have been superseded.

> "It commits the Government for the first time to comprehensive severance provisions to facilitate labour mobility."

Nonsense. Neddy made a similar declaration and the Tory Government accepted it.

Messrs. Barratt-Brown and Royden Harrison then offer one or two criticisms of the Joint Statement of Intent. It does not for example commit the Government to "entering the field of general manufacturing activity". Surely it is naive to expect the employers to agree that it should.

> "The reference to social need and justice is too vague. . . . Socialists require that the phrase be restated in a clearly equalitarian fashion—to require the levelling up of lower paid workers' incomes."

But the employers would not have committed themselves to any equalitarian position.

> "It is unsatisfactory that the Statement refers to 'keeping under review the general movement of prices' with examination of particular prices after the event. The Government must establish a price tribunal to which all employers in key sectors will be obliged to submit in advance proposals for price advances beyond a certain amount of frequency."

We agree that no key price increases should be agreed to without complete investigation. The Government could be forced to accept this but the employers will not voluntarily do so. Barratt-Brown and Royden Harrison do not seem to understand that the Statement of Intent as far as employers' organisations and trade unions are concerned is a Statement on what they are prepared to accept. The employers would never voluntarily accept such a form of price control as they advocate.

The *Tribune* writers do not seem to grasp the complete class co-operation standpoint of the Statement. They say that they are neither "millenial Mondists or infantile Leftists". But take millenial Mondism (or illusions about what class co-operation can accomplish) out of the document and there is nothing left. The whole basis of the document is that all policy related to profits, prices and redundancy has got to be agreed to voluntarily by the employers.

Take paragraph II as quoted above which says that "whether the behaviour of prices or of wages, salaries and other money incomes *is in the national interest as defined by the Government after consultation with management and unions*". Take a sharp rise in prices or profits. The Government cannot say whether this is in the national interest or not until it has consulted managements as well as unions and it knows that if it is to preserve its precious class co-operation machinery it must be continually making concessions to managements.

There is no sense in telling the Government to be more socialist in its activities, when it is committed, through this machinery, to consult the employers beforehand on all the economic measures it is taking. Considering that this is a Labour Government, returned in the teeth of the opposition of many employers, the Statement of Intent puts the latter in a remarkably privileged position.

Source of Confusion

The term "incomes policy" is a major source of confusion. As we have shown, the original suggestions envisaged a wages policy restraining the increase of wages and salaries. Only after resistance by the unions was the necessity of restraining other incomes added and the name changed to "incomes

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policy". It is misnamed! What is being discussed is not a policy for increasing incomes, or for redistributing incomes, but a policy for directly restraining advances in wages and salaries, and indirectly—very indirectly and inadequately—dealing with prices and profits as an afterthought.

Along come a number of people who interpret "incomes policy" as meaning the redistribution of incomes between the social classes, regard Mr. Brown's policy as being inadequate and put forward an alternative incomes policy, thereby adding to the confusion. Of course the unions and the workers generally should not oppose a policy of redistributing the national income in the interests of the workers' wages and salaries, but that has nothing to do with an incomes policy which restrains the growth of wages and salaries, in a situation in which this must involve the increase of profits and capital gains. The straight issue is—Do we want an incomes policy of the type that George Brown is evolving, or do we not? That is what union conferences and the T.U.C. will be called on to decide. It is not wrong and not sectarian to oppose an incomes policy which will put the working class at a disadvantage. It is wrong and it is grossly misleading for the *Tribune* writers to suggest that a new Utopian petty bourgeois incomes policy can be imposed on Mr. Brown at this stage.

Messrs. Barratt-Brown and Royden Harrison seem to think that the fact that the Government and the employers are favouring a George Brown type of "incomes policy" enables the unions to say that they want a different type of incomes policy, one which will redistribute incomes and wealth, and if the unions want this type of policy they can get it. Surely not on the basis of "Government, management and unions co-operating in a spirit of mutual confidence". The employers want an incomes policy which will objectively redistribute the national income to their benefit. There is no sense in the unions approaching them with the proposition that "we will agree to an incomes policy provided it redistributes the national income to our advantage". On that basis the employers will not play.

What is Intended

The Statement of Intent is in some ways a more reactionary document than any of the Neddy documents. Let us look at some of its propositions.

> "To keep increases in wages, salaries and other forms of income in line with this increase in productivity."

But wages and salaries are treated in a vastly different way from other incomes. They are restricted at source according to the "guiding light". The "other incomes" (profits and rent) are not restricted at source. They are appropriated by the companies and the shareholders. If their growth is deemed to be excessive some of them may be taken back in the future by taxation. Says the Statement:

> "They [i.e. the Government] will use their fiscal powers or other appropriate means to correct any excessive growth in aggregate profits as compared with the growth of total wages and salaries *after allowing for short term fluctuations.*"

So in estimating the rise in profits there has to be a long argy-bargy about the base-line from which to start the measurement of their growth. That could take a long, long time. Then it is the increase in aggregate profits that is to be corrected. This means that industries of higher than average productivity such as mining, steel, chemicals, motors, will have quite a jump in their profits, for their workers will be restrained by the "guiding light" from getting an increase in earnings commensurate with their *own* increase in productivity. It will be the "guiding light"—3 to 3½ per cent—and not the increase of the workers' productivity in the industries concerned that decides what wage increases they will get. Note that it is the growth in the aggregate profits of the capitalist class as a whole that will be taxed. The firms whose profits shoot up abnormally owing to wages and salaries restraint will find quite a lot of their excess profits sticking to their fingers.

While wages and salaries are restrained at source, prices are not. Capitalist firms are allowed to push up prices as high as they can. It is only afterwards that this action is reviewed. They should be prevented from raising their prices in the first instance.

Nothing is more absurd than to suggest that a policy which fixes wage and salary increases according to a "guiding light" favours the lower paid workers. If the "guiding light" is to operate in general, the less exceptions to it the easier it will be to operate it. Exceptions there can be, but they will be few and far between. When Mr. Leslie Cannon of the Electrical Trades Union argues that adherence to the guiding light will actually increase the gap between the higher paid workers and the lower paid he is absolutely correct. Unfortunately his alternative, namely the fixing of all wage differentials by some central body according to some process of job evaluation is likely to destroy collective bargaining altogether. Certainly something must be done about the lower paid workers by the unions covering the various industries. There must be an agreement that in all wage settlements the increase for the lower paid will be greater than those for the higher paid. A large part of such increases must be at the expense of the employers. To attempt totally to halt all increases for the higher paid (and the recent agreements of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and

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Engineering Unions moves too much in this direction) is to destroy the whole policy altogether. The same principle applies to women's wages. The guiding light will effectively stop the movement in the direction of equal pay.

Inefficient low paid industries are a special problem in which we should expect a Labour Government to co-operate with the unions, the latter pressing for a much higher rate of wages while the Government pressurises those industries to modernise.

We have shown that an "incomes policy" will lead to a redistribution of income to the rich (basically the big firms and their large shareholders) at the expense of the wage and salary earners. It will also increase the inequalities of personal fortunes, in favour of the rich. In a debate on wages policy at the 1949 Labour Party Conference Mr. Roy Jenkins, M.P., said that the main source of investment for industrial expansion was undistributed profits, but added:

> "Undistributed profits therefore help the investment. But there is another difficulty; they lead to a greater inequality not of income today but of property in the future. I think we ought to know what are the Chancellor's thoughts about a large-scale levy to correct this tendency."

The Neddy report on "Conditions Favourable to Faster Growth" (May 1963) admitted that this tendency for the rich to become richer was inevitable under an incomes policy and suggested a "wealth tax". This was advocated for a time by Mr. Callaghan, but since he became Chancellor he has now dropped it with a resounding bang. So the long term result of an "incomes policy" is that it will make the distribution of incomes and the distribution of personal fortunes more unequal than they are even today. People who set themselves this aim have no claim to the title of socialists, democratic or otherwise.

Last but not least an "incomes policy" panders to the most deep-seated prejudices of the British capitalist class. Throughout the twentieth century, they have undertaken much less capital investment than their rivals and have made much less effective use of what investment they have undertaken. All capitalist classes, as a matter of principle, declaim against the high wages of the workers, but the British capitalist class is unique in persisting in operating a lower rate of capital investment than its rivals and then putting all the blame for the slower rate of British economic growth on the workers. By giving the restraint of wages and salaries first place in its programme the Labour Government is slandering the workers and perpetuating a dangerous reactionary myth.

Sport and Culture

Ted Baker

(*from a report of the Birmingham Communist Party Cultural Committee*)

SPORT is but one facet of the whole subject of physical culture which, in the sense of training the human being to perform certain actions, is the starting point of human culture. For life is movement and movement is life, and the art of human movement gives us ballet, circus and athletics. The society, therefore, which makes possible the widest opportunities for all who are able to take part in the arts of human movement, of which sport will have the greatest following as distinct from the conception of sport existing on spectator appeal, must produce, generation by generation, a truly peace-loving nation with an insatiable desire for social activity.

The basic theory that education of youth must be a skilled balance between academics and physical education is as true as it is ancient. The good life for every young man and woman blessed with physical normality is the outcome of the equation love of learning and love of movement and the latter may be the more urgent, the term of youthful vigour being but a few short years. But these are seeming platitudes, although not to be compared with "Sport is an outlet for letting off steam". Sections of our youth smash up railway carriages, or have gang fights, and our Borstals are full of youths who "let off steam". We are talking of sport from love of movement. Letting off steam, whatever that means, should never be accepted in a sane society as an excuse for uncouth, irresponsible or anti-social behaviour. On the other hand sporting endeavour adding to the joy of living for the individual and all who care to look on is grossly underestimated by too many for its social value. Hence the poverty of facilities around us that sickens when compared with those of other countries as in, for instance, the West European countries, without for the moment looking at the state of sport under socialism.

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World Role of Sport

Aided by Telstar and the simple fact that the Olympics, 1964, were held in October with the longer evenings setting in, a wide and varied audience watched the presentation from Tokio. When the Olympic flame died away even busy housewives sighed as the greatest spectacle of modern times faded from the screens for ever. It was not so much the heroic performances of the athletes but the impact on the average mind of the whole colossal event—the glimpses of modern Tokio with its monorails, supermarkets and multiple flyovers, and the vast crowd of athletes, all nations mixed together, in that glorious closing ceremony. Many were the boys and girls who vowed to become Olympic athletes, and that is as it should be. That is where it has to start—with the wish of a schoolboy to excel at sport. So the boy will have to join an affiliated club, which is where the road to Mexico City begins, leading on through the world of sport and the fraternity of nations at peace.

To the schoolboy a sporting event can be a cameo of the processes affecting the individual in adult society. All are struggling to achieve, but the prizes are few. The strugglers have weeks of training behind them, and for good or ill some amount of advice, and the lucky ones some qualified coaching; pocket money will have been spent on equipment, and club raffles have been held to meet the expenses of teams. There is a dialectic of success—to learn from defeat and to work for improvement and so to successs. While this, of course, is normal to all kinds of human endeavour, even to preparation for war, there is no better way to teach youth how to purchase a little success with a lot of effort mixed with disappointment than through sport. When this kind of endeavour is given to sport on a nation-wide scale we have a civilised medium which can be engaged in by all nations together as in the Olympic Games. Sport, therefore, in its widest sense is an attribute of peaceful society. So much so that acts and incidents against the good of sport produce public reaction as in no other sphere. Racial discrimination enforced by certain governments is abhorrent to world sportsmen. Hitler's insult to the great Negro athlete Jesse Owens will never be forgotten. And sporting Britain expects a Labour Foreign Secretary to do his duty, for more forthright language was addressed to his Tory predecessor over the NATO embargo on East German teams than any politician would dare to indulge in. South Africa has the unhappy distinction of being the first nation to be excluded from the Olympic Games for its accursed apartheid policy while even fascist Spain complies with the International Code of Sport. Again, in 1956 within weeks of the Hungary affair and while the propaganda and press invective was at its height the Red Army were playing West Bromwich Albion here in the Midlands before a crowd of 60,000, which rose to a magnificent exhibition of soccer and eleven goals. There were no demonstrations, no jibes—not a single slogan. But the working masses the world over have long known that sport is the common ground where nations strive to the utmost but only in peace.

That world sport is a power and an influence in our time which even governments, however militaristic, must come to respect is a fact which should not be lost upon all the movements for peace as in the words of the Marquis of Exeter in the Lords on the 22nd of May, 1963:

> ". . . In the sports, if I may take my own federation of which I am President, in the International Amateur Athletic Federation, we have 126 member countries; and there are many other great international federations with almost as many members. So you have here, literally in every country, a state within a state and although world government is, in politics, at this stage of history, a pipe dream, it is an accomplished fact in the world of amateur sport. . . . In the Olympic Games in 1936 in Berlin, Hitler stated that the Chairman of their organising committee, a respected member of the International Committee, because he was half Jewish, could not remain in that position. The President of the I.O.C. went to Hitler and told him that if he insisted there would be no Games in Berlin. Hitler had to climb down."

Can it now be said that through the Olympic Games of 1964, and twenty years after the inhumanities of the Japanese war machine, young Japan has rejoined the human family? The runner who lit the flame was born while the horrid darkness of the atomic cloud covered the sky over Hiroshima.

Sports Facilities in Britain

While we recall the deeds of our heroes at Tokio what should we say of the British team? Our picture is of the men and women scintillating on the victory rostrum and of others prone but glorious in defeat on the track. Truly can it be said every man and woman in our team was "having a go"—in sporting language the last word in courage and sincerity of effort. After Tokio it is no longer cynical to remark that Britain does not lack for world class athletes, that if a youth wishes to indulge in sport there are clubs to join. Indeed, there is a current argument that there is a surfeit of sport in Britain, for instance, there is too much professional football. Against this what is the state of British sport and what are the comparisons country with country? We are indebted for the answer to Mr. D. D. Molyneux, M.A., Lecturer in Physical Education at Birmingham University, in his excellent publication, "Central Government Aid to Sport and Physical Recreation in Countries of Western Europe".

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In 1960 the Report of the Wolfenden Committee on Sport entitled "Sport and the Community" was published in this country and in the same year a publication by the German Olympic Association entitled "A Memorandum on the Golden Plan for Health, Sport and Recreation" appeared in West Germany. Two distinct bodies with a single purpose, but there the affinity rudely ends, as in the words of Mr. Molyneux, "in the priority in public expenditure given to sport and physical recreation in all its forms, and in the degree of public responsibility assumed for the development of this sector of social life in the two countries". It would be difficult to find a West European country that has not had its own Wolfenden Report, and thus the example of the Golden Plan appears to be the higher. Indeed, it may be said Britain was belatedly following suit but now in the advent of a Labour Government we have a Minister for Sport, of sorts, whose first task seems to be giving the kiss of life to the Wolfenden Report. The Wolfenden Committee proposed the setting up of a Sports Development Council responsible to the Lord President of the Council or directly appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but separate from the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the Council would be to assume the direct financial relationship between Government departments and the various bodies of sport. Also the committee recommended that £5,000,000 should be distributed in cash in any one year by the Development Council in non-recurrent grants to assist the various bodies and national associations concerned with physical recreation. The idea of a Sports Development Council was supported by the overwhelming majority of sports bodies.

Five million pounds in any one year! The report was, in due course, debated in both Houses and in the Lords on the 15th of February, 1961, the Lord Chancellor announced an increase in the Central Council of Physical Recreation grant for 1961-62 to pay for the maintenance of national recreation centres at Bisham Abbey, Lilleshall, Plas Y Brenin and another at Largs in Scotland. The grand total of these grants was estimated at £12,000. The skies were clearing and dreams would soon become bricks and mortar. But summer brought more rain than sunshine, as is the way with Tory Governments, and on April 9th, 1962, a little budget was announced and during the speech the Chancellor stated that "certain public expenditure on desirable but not essential matters would have to run at a lower level". So the Wolfenden Report was knocked out with one blow of a Government fist for its recommendations were mentioned as an example. In the next budget direct grant aid for the year was raised from £470,000 to £670,000. That was two years ago and since then we have the reconstruction of Crystal Palace as a sports centre and a few relatively small municipal stadiums have appeared about the country, but to state this is in implementation of the Wolfenden Committee recommendations may be straining our faith in politicians.

How fared the Golden Plan in Adenauer's Germany? If a dissentient voice was raised it must have been a very quiet whisper, for all leading parties pledged support so that the plan was adopted as a national policy. At a local government conference in September 1960, Chancellor Adenauer rose to say:

> "You all know the Golden Plan. . . . I will do what is in my power to see that the Federal Government fulfils its task in this field. . . . Please take care that the communities do what they can that these facilities will be provided that have to be provided for the recreation of our children and the citizens in their spare time. Our population will understand if you give special consideration to this task and draft a programme how this can be done each in his community."

The overall cost of this was estimated at £568,900,000 over fifteen years. The combined yearly target figure for subsidies to the communities was to be £28,000,000 in four years. By 1962 Federal Germany had issued to the communities more than 70 per cent of that figure, which at that time practically assured the success of the first four-year stage of the Golden Plan. As in Britain so it was in Federal Germany, that the spring of 1962 brought economic cuts which slowed down our national building programme; to our shame sports building was excluded from all this, whilst the Golden Plan went ahead.

Economics and Physical Recreation

For Mr. Howells the task ahead has far wider complications than the direction of public money into the required channels. It is not a case of supervising a prepared plan. Mr. Howells will be faced with deep rooted and implacable forces hostile to any form of popular culture, for D. D. Molyneux makes it clear sports development on a national scale is not merely a question of economics, the fundamental is the attitude of the Government of the day to the need for physical recreation in the community, and so there is but one conclusion to be reached—"of all the countries of Western Europe Britain is at the bottom of an ascending scale". That physical recreation facilities are "desirable but less essential" means that with the first chill wind of economic slow-down the youth of this country must continue to bear the alternative of the streets or nothing. Maybe the motive for this attitude is in the capitalist principle, if that is the term, that everything must be made to pay. However, we note that Government expenditure was estimated at £35,000,000

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up to 1965 and we hope will be increased by the new Government, but that in no way ensures the completion of anything in the shortest possible time because there is no central authority or council in Britain with the necessary powers in this direction. Almost the whole issue will be in the hands of Local Authorities who in the game of local politics will themselves decide what it is that is desirable but less essential.

Such is the nature of sport, it turned out at Tokio that the British team won more medals than their European opponents whose Governments do not suffer from the "less essential" attitude. While this shows the worth of our team as men and women as well as being athletes, our argument is about the social value of sport and physical recreation, not how to win medals. In this situation how then do British youths reach world class standards? For answer we must begin to appreciate the dedication and sacrifice involved, especially in the formative years. It is true there is coaching available, text-books and training assistance, but as in the exigencies of general education tuition is for the more promising and self-help for the rest. Dedication there must be in these days of the four-minute mile but what of the sacrifices in time when travelling to train perhaps in the next town and loss of earnings when accepting sporting commitments? And spare-time which should be given to apprenticeship studies? Truly the British athlete carries a handicap far heavier than any imposed by the association handicapper. Let us consider the general pursuit of sport in relation to our population of 52 million. So when we note the post-war records in world sport of some of the smaller populations, Sweden 7.4 million, Czechoslovakia 13.5, Finland 4.4, against 52 million in Britain, it is clear our strength lies dormant, for while British sporting spirit is more than willing our economic flesh is feeble. It is in the state schools where, although the level of sport compares with most West European countries, the attitude of the Government and Local Authorities spells frustration not only for the children of the working class but to the quite large number of people who in their own time and no doubt at their own expense work to give sports and physical development to children. The newer schools may have equipment, city schools their gymnasiums and a small area of asphalt, those on the outskirts their gymnasiums plus an open space for playing fields. Some schools may have an appointed games teacher as the number of qualified coaches have increased of late, but far too much of the physical education in schools apart from compulsory games in lesson time is undertaken voluntarily by people and organisations, who must be given credit for what is being achieved against the conditions and the attitude of Government. Depending so much on voluntary effort we find schools tend to "specialise" in one kind of sport according to the inclination of the teacher and the facilities available. This means that boys and girls with no aptitude for the "school sport" tend to become distinterested often in any kind of sport. Meanwhile the work goes on and there are schools' sports associations which organise often with the help of adult clubs championships and district competitions. But here we find so much sport undertaken by voluntary teachers, and outside school hours, that interest apart from participation is for and by the willing. Those pupils with no inclination will turn their backs on sport very often to work, for instance, in shops on Saturdays to earn a little money. And so the sport-loving boys and girls leave school with an interest in sport because they may be relatively good at it while the others leave school and all they disliked, including sport, behind them. Only a few will understand that sport by its need for self-discipline in a relationship with others is integral in a civilised way of living and because life is movement and movement is life.

Clubs

That there are clubs to join is indisputable for England, Mother of Parliaments—Mother of the Free—also gave birth to modern sport and nearly all the games wherever they are played on land or water. That is why, in any direction we go, there are sporting institutions and clubs quite often a century old and others approaching that length of existence. But while we have so many clubs the outstanding fact of the situation is that few of them are big enough, while most have remained stationary and even decreased in membership over many years. We are now looking, as it were, through a microscope, at the living cells which make up in their thousands the county associations, the area bodies and finally the national associations of whatever type of sport the club caters for. Like all living cells they multiply, divide, die and disappear and are subject to maladies. The most common is the blight through lack of cash. But in spite of all, and even human failings to be expected wherever people foregather, the life force of the organisation is the code of sportsmanship—accepted by all. We see democracy in action with meetings, and voting and minutes being taken to compare with any trade union or board of directors, but above all is the need for cash and how to get it. Only as a last resort must subscriptions be raised. Social functions and lotteries are the time-honoured methods so that the proceeds of gambling are vital to the circulatory system of the sporting body. Perhaps it was easier and certainly less onerous and expensive for the late Government to relax the gambling laws than to

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implement the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report.

Then there are the clubs without a square inch of ground to call their own, holding committee meetings in pubs, cafés or any agreed corner far from the scene of their sporting activity. The backroom workers for sport engage in the business of booking park pitches, training grounds, dressing rooms with or without washing facilities, and they struggle year by year against the encroachment of city planning motivated by the fiendish determination to complete the erection of every office block, department store and petrol station before, perhaps in a generation or so, the economy can afford the non-venal demands for culture—intellectual and physical. The city of Birmingham is now famous for its "Ring Road" reconstruction of the city centre and its central shopping complex but while the skyline changes people are talking of "the Desert of Nowhere to Go". The imbalance between commercial building and the cultural needs of one-and-a-quarter million people is astonishing and depressing. The truth is there are less facilities and therefore opportunities here for physical and sporting activity than in 1939. There is a municipal running and cycling track laid down before the war on a relatively small area between a reservoir and a main road. The capacity for spectators, standing only with no cover, is but a few thousands. About two years ago the condition of the track was the subject of a scathing complaint in a club's monthly magazine. The author, a local athlete, was invited to a radio interview with a city councillor to discuss the matter. The councillor emitted a barrage of vast-sounding amounts the council had already spent and a clarion of responsibility towards "more necessary matters"—an outstanding example at Local Authority level of the attitude which has made this country the wooden-spoonists in the world-wide task of providing physical recreation facilities as an essential in an adequate standard of living. We have the ground of Birchfield Harriers, opened in the 1930's in spite of the depression of that time, but the "affluent" 1960's have found this magnificent old club with its galaxy of world class athletes in financial trouble because of the new rating system and income tax. Recently a scheme was announced in the press for eight district sports centres to be set up about the city. It was very brief and no details were given; we read the paper stage has been reached. A stadium is in project on the south side of the city and has been for twenty years. No stadium has risen, while a few miles away in a much smaller borough a useful track with indoor facilities has been built. It is the indoor sports which have disappeared from the life of Birmingham and gymnastic clubs of which several were quite renowned which have suffered oblivion. But there are a number of smart "Health and Figure Clubs" with emphasis on the figure, widely advertised and seem to be limited liability companies rather than clubs. There are no visions of future Olympics here, no one is training for anything, no one is being coached. The "member" pays the substantial fee and takes exercise on the shining equipment. Time was when a mass gymnastic display covering the pitch was put on at Villa Park during a sports meeting. Since the war there has been no such spectacle. Except in the schools the city council provide no gymnasium facilities but several new swimming baths have been opened although in this city of over a million people there is no swimming pool suitable for championship events. So the catalogue of inadequacy lengthens. Before the war boxing, both amateur and professional, thrived in the Midlands with about twenty clubs in Birmingham alone. Most were works clubs open to any youth to join. Boxing tournaments took place almost every night during the season in some part of the city, but today it would be difficult to find more than three clubs in existence and instead of the boxing rings and the crowds cheering the fortunes of their own local boys there are several professional wrestling shows each week—non-descript sport in this country, doubtful in origin and control. Ten-pin bowling has been imported from America.

The Effect on the Youth

The schoolboy has his slice of sporting life thanks to the interest and leadership of the Schools' Sports Federation, but when school is left behind and the earning of money is the dominant purpose in life there awaits for too many youths the desert of social inadequacy. The pleasures of the grown-ups are still several years away, and besides even if drinking beer is manly, who wants to sit still in a pub all night? There must be action, and so the gangs appear. There are other ways of being somebody than by hours of sweat and discipline because nobody in a gang must ever be "chicken" no matter what the proving otherwise may mean. If a man is not chicken he must fight and the gangs fight on the grand scale, gang against gang which takes brains to organise, and if the other gang is engaged elsewhere, some hapless individual for beating up will do.

Will our society never learn what sportsmen the world over have always known—that the real tough guy is the lad who packs his bag on a Saturday afternoon to give of his best against the opposition, whether expert or novice, and to abide by the outcome. Too often do we read in the press that youths are being severely dealt with perhaps for "making an affray" or for just plain hooliganism. In these cases, whatever is blamed as the causes, does no

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one ever ask: "What of the districts in which these youths live?" At the time the gangs were facing up to each other what might they have been doing otherwise? What legitimate group activity was possible? Perhaps it was Sunday evening when the social pulse is weakest. So now the ringleaders are behind bars and the rest are on probation may we wander ourselves in the "Desert of Nowhere to Go". In the first place the youths wanted to group together, they were in no mood for sitting still. They were seeking activity. If it were Sunday evening and leaving out church-going there remained the pubs, coffee bars, perhaps a cinema, and there was precious little else they could do except walk the streets until it was time to go to bed. That was the way of it on the evening of the trouble. As it always has been, the streets or nothing. Perhaps the lads would have been better off if the streets had never been built and they could have roamed the lanes and fields that have gone for ever.

Sport—Amateur, Professional and Socialist

It is ironic that the bifurcation of British sport into amateur and professional was achieved when the pioneers of pure sport formed the Amateur Athletic Association in 1882. The world is and should be eternally grateful to those old-time sportsmen who crusaded mightily against the corrupt state of sport and so made possible, as other countries followed their example, the Olympic Games as we know them. But in doing so and declaring for pure amateurism they created a problem for working class athletes which is greater than ever today. While leisure is supposed to have increased there are still too many sacrifices awaiting the amateur. The expense of training and travelling is not the main problem; "time off" and consequent loss of wages is the delicate factor. Happy the athlete whose boss is sport-minded, as opposed to the employer who reacts with: "Choose, boy, sport or your job". And it is not simply a question of losing normal working time, the situation is aggravated by overtime working throughout our industries so that, as has been shown, the average working week is actually longer than those of other European countries in spite of trade union agreements. This means too many working youths are torn between the prospect of extra money-making or what may seem a sacrifice for sport on Saturday afternoons. This widespread attitude shows a serious defect in our pattern of living and shows how far, like their elders, so many of the younger generation have subjugated the arts of living to the economics of the capitalist system. The determination of leisure is a prerequisite in the struggle for wider cultural opportunities which Mr. Howell must impress upon employers and "productivity" trade union leaders alike.

The British sporting scene often gives the impression that our sport is nothing if not professional. This is true from the point of view of crowd attraction, news space, the cult of the individual, gambling on a vast scale, and if we can accept sport reduced as nearly as possible to an industrial form. For that is what the British professional football club has become, a limited liability company producing and selling football to the largest number of customers it can attract. It seems quite wrong to describe such organisations as "clubs". No one can "join" or become a member because everybody connected is employed in some way and paid a salary or wage. Be this as it may, professional soccer is the crowd attraction against which the amateur game cannot compete. It produces our highest standards and our international strength is drawn entirely from its ranks whatever may be the sources of other footballing countries' international talent. So it is the spectacle of professional soccer for the public, or little else, together with the colossal gambling of the Pools and the privilege of paying at the turnstiles to stand and watch. But if a supporter is so inspired by love for his "club" he can join the supporters' club and so take part in an astonishing development of ragged-trousered philanthropy. For a supporters' club is not a section of the famous Wanderers or United, but a separate entity comprised of individuals who, by organising totes, dances, etc., gather in many thousands of pounds per season which they hand over proudly and regularly to the limited liability company which is the object of their idolatry. These same supporters' clubs have added tremendously to the property value of the grounds, for many fine stands have been paid for in this way. That so much football is dependent on the efforts of supporters' clubs is evident, and the question can now be asked—after so much giving what influence or representation have the supporters' clubs in the management of the football clubs? The answer is none—definitely none. The philanthropy of it all. Let us hope from this situation the day is not far distant when the barriers will be thrown down and real membership of the Wanderers will be open to all and the consequent thousands of members will have a great social centre as well as a football team, professional though it may be, to call their own.

It is incredible, says the British fan, that our opponents from the socialist countries who have met and defeated our best professional sides in international matches can be amateurs. But long since this was answered by the Chairman of the Olympic Amateur Committee when he stated: "No sportsman in the Communist countries is paid for taking part in sport". This is the situation exactly, and to understand it we should look at

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sport in the life of working people, for instance, in Czechoslovakia. Firstly, it should be understood that the Communist conception of a factory is not merely a producing plant but a community of the people who work in the factory; their families, the needs of life and cultural activities being provided for out of the wealth created by the factory. The workers' organisations stake their claims in what amounts to a pattern of living, the drama groups, the artists, the young pioneers and, of course, the sportsmen. There is a tangible extension of the socialist principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," from the worker's labour to his cultural life. There is no cultural desert in socialism. In the engineering plant at Dubnica where 1,200 girls and boys serve three-year apprenticeships, three hours physical training each week is obligatory, but sport, however, is an out-of-hours voluntary activity and teachers assist the boys and girls to follow the branch of sport suitable to them.

What Can and Should be Done

What are the tenets of the attitude that facilities for physical recreation are "desirable but less essential"? It can only be that in capitalist society the people must go without or make do themselves even by charity or gambling if what is being asked for cannot be made to pay. This is the case in the system of youth club organisations. Thrust forward by religious and political bodies, the youth leaders appear as "do-gooders" and raisers of future voting power. Caring for the interests of youth too often takes the form of charitable work in inadequate premises with cast-off equipment doing things for the basic purpose of occupying time. Far too much of this has no connection with organised sport, and indeed many youth leaders have neither knowledge nor experience of sport. The city of Birmingham is reconstructing its city centre by joint effort between private enterprise and socialism. The private enterprise aspect is now many millions of pounds ahead of the socialist, while amidst the shining concrete canyons the youth of Birmingham are taking the hat round. The Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs is appealing for £150,000 for new building and for an expansion of its work, and while the fund materialises the organisers have carried out an investigation into the mysteries of how girls spend their spare time. It seems, according to a press report, that some of the club leaders actually held the opinion that girls only want to listen to records, dance, sit around or chat, and therefore the results of the survey are "rather surprising"—to them. They have discovered the modern girl is not lacking in a spirit of adventure; the girls have organised their own interests and hobbies when they have found the club programme insufficient, and furthermore the girls go in for judo, potholing, cricket and general athletics. So in the year of 1964 the decision has been reached that within the club there must be equal opportunities for girls and boys. We recall that the suffragettes made the same point.

In whatever needs to be done, for Mr. Howell the attitude of the "less essential" is Mount Everest; a constant feature of the British scene is the multiplicity of voluntary organisations in the general government of sport ranging from the Football Association, the Central Council for Physical Recreation, to the Schools' Sports Association, which altogether represents one of the greatest concentrations of sports administration and expertise of any country in the world. The fact that so few Local Authorities have sought consultation with this immense volume of experience in the many schemes of reconstruction is the index of blatant indifference. Who are these people who in their ignorance and greed are facing the wrong way from the direction of civilised progress towards the solution of the problem? People in the game of local politics who display their "realism" in opposition at all times to the ratepayers' money being spent on the "luxuries" of sport and culture. People who think that every square yard of God's earth was given to man, the builder, for the erection thereon of every type of pile and sprawl for the greater profit of private enterprise. These should feel the impact of public pressure guided by Mr. Howell. Plans should be valid only after consultation with the sports organisations, for that is where the pressure will begin—thereafter progress will be expected. Labour groups and progressives in Local Authorities should insist on raising the sixpenny rate for this purpose and there should be no bingo halls or strip-tease clubs in any area which does not have a youth centre. And as Mr. Howell goes about the country he should make bold to sweep out the foul lack of patriotism which has denied to British youth that which has been given as of right to others. Behind Mr. Howell the weight of the Government should be directed against those employers who are the assassins of leisure by running their works seven days every week and advertise vacancies with "plenty of overtime". The T.U.C. should inaugurate a real campaign with the implementation of the 40-hour week which would need to be an attack on the mentality which has never learned the difference between living to work and working to live. It should not be too difficult to convince people that noise, dirt and violence should not be allowed to corrupt our younger generation while private property sprawls and the cost of armaments multiplies.

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Hill Farming in Scotland

Hugh MacDiarmid

WHAT is called the Hill Scheme came to an end some time ago. It was designed to subsidise hill and marginal land farms and finance the modernisation of farmhouses and cottages and provide such things as tarmacadamised farm roads, cattle-grids, and the installation of telephone and electricity. The reason why it came to an end is simply that its beneficiaries had already got fantastic benefits for which "feather-bedding" is a quite inadequate term. In lonely parts of Scotland you can see farmhouses and cottages magnificently equipped at the public expense. But only a steadily decreasing number of these are now occupied by farmers or farmworkers. They have largely been taken over by business men from the cities as holiday retreats or sporting estates. It is no wonder. If the experts agreed that to bring a farm up to the approvable state required a scheme of improving the farmhouse, equipping the place with all sorts of mod. cons., macadamising the farm-roads etc. at a cost of, say, £32,000, the beauty of the whole thing from the owner's point of view is that half of that sum went straight into the owner's pocket. Not only so, but he was allowed to charge it as expenditure for essential farm improvement over a ten year period, or at £1,600 a year, exempt from income tax. No wonder the business men rushed in to get their share of this incredible bonanza.

Farms for Week-ends

They did not wish to bother with farming at all of course—only to have the place to come out to at week-ends or in holiday times occasionally and have a little grouse-shooting and angling. What happened was this, to cite a typical case. The farmer had got too old. He had four married shepherds in cottages on the holding. One of these or a neighbouring farm might wish to buy the place. It was thought it would cost £20,000 for the land and about £16,000 for the stock and plenishings. He could at the utmost raise about £20,000. He went to see his bank manager, who of course knew the quality of the holding and what, properly run, it could yield annually. The bank manager agreed that the place was worth buying at £36,000, and the would-be purchaser reiterated that he could not possibly think of buying it if it went for any higher figure. Sale day comes. The would-be purchaser, and any other farmers or shepherds or practical men who bid found themselves completely out-offered on behalf of some city business men who secured it at between £50,000 and £60,000. Then he asked one of the shepherds to take over complete management. The others lost their jobs—and, of course, these being tied, their cottages. If they had adolescent sons who had thought to follow their father's calling as shepherds they had to abandon the idea and become policemen, long-distance lorry drivers, or emigrants overseas. They had no earthly chance of following the traditional way of life of their kind. The sum result of this sort of thing accentuates rural depopulation and deprives the countryside of its best native stock. The process resembles the Highland Clearances all over again and is no less cruel if less sensationally so. The whole business has served precisely the opposite end it was intended to serve when the 2s. 6d. per ewe on hill farms was introduced during the terrible 'thirties. That was to keep the native stock of farmers, shepherds etc. in the glens.

Once a business man buys a hill-farm and appoints someone to manage it for him, he makes it clear that he will not be there himself except occasionally at week-ends or holiday times, and has no interest whatever in the sheep. His first instruction to his manager is almost invariably that there must be no heather-burning. He wants cover for grouse.

Gifts from the Government

The net result is that hill-sheep subsidies, now raised to 25s. per ewe, with £21 or thereabouts per cow for hill-cattle, are drawn by business men who do not do anything at all for it. It is simply a gift from the Government. And the farms in question are run by one or two shepherds where formerly four or more were employed. And the price of such holdings has been boosted until practical men find them quite unpurchaseable. Ask one of these business men how it comes about that if shares on the Stock Exchange fall the business in question declines in value whereas with land precisely the opposite is happening, and the business man you are speaking to will probably suffer a rush of blood to the head and subject you to a volley of abuse as a "damned red".

The fact is that about the beginning of the century, on the better hill-farms in the Borders, Lanarkshire,

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and Ayrshire, the rent of such a holding ran at about 5s. or 7s. per sheep per annum, while on the very poor lands in Argyllshire and other Highland areas it was only a fraction of that—say, 8d. or 9d. per sheep.

There are farms in Argyllshire which are believed to have four acres for each sheep—an indication of the extreme poverty of the land in question. It is, in fact, quite unsuitable for sheep. The Board of Agriculture inspectors cannot possibly check the number of sheep on such an estate to find if the figure agrees with that on which subsidy is demanded. One has only to have a chat with the shepherds at a clipping to learn the truth. The subsidy is just paid on guess-work, and the provisional figures supplied certainly do not err on the side of under-statement. Farms like those in Argyllshire and the other Highland counties ought never to have had the subsidy, whereas the good hill-farms in the Border counties never needed it, if they had continued to be farmed by practical folk instead of business men who are simply neither more nor less than "State-created gentry", and the cost of the land had not been allowed to soar to the present preposterous figures.

In Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, and the Borders, the old race of hard-working tenant farmers mostly acquired their holdings about forty years ago and are now sixty or over. Their like can never be repeated. What has been done therefore has not only made a farce of the running of the hill-farms, but has forced out an invaluable element of our rural population—a basic national asset, in fact—in favour of an increasing number of business men who fancy a few days' shooting or fishing, or simply an inexpensive country *pied-à-terre*. Argyll and the West Highlands are crowded with these would-be country gentlemen—mostly ex-Army or ex-Navy officers, already in receipt of substantial pensions. Serried ranks of them are to be seen at all the Highland Games at Oban and elsewhere and often they have a special enclosure to which less privileged people are not admitted. They have certainly "never had it so good".

The height of absurdity in this matter can be seen at the Lanark Market, or other markets, where a well-known sheep breeder may sell sixteen to twenty ewes at an average of £1,000 each, the top price being £4,000 or over. Yet the mothers of these valuable animals are still yielding the owner the 25s. subsidy.

Nor must it be thought that there are not several other ways by which these lucky people are enriched to a scandalous extent, in addition to the prime fact that they get off with very much lower death duties—lower, indeed, by over a half. Also the guarantee on fat lambs assures the hill-farmer of a far better price than he could otherwise command. So if, for example, he sold a number of wethers, graded (at a guess, of course—the weight is much more) at 32 lbs. of saleable mutton, a year or two ago they would sell at 1s. 6½d. per lb., but the Government price maintenance guarantee had to pay the difference to 3s. 1½d. per lb., and the lucky seller consequently got two cheques—one from the market and the other from the Government, plus of course the hill-sheep subsidy of 25s. per ewe. No wonder shepherds tell you: "Oh, the boss pays my wages out of the subsidy, without touching the sheep at all!" This, too, is why at these markets you see hundreds of Rolls Royce and other expensive cars. They can well afford them. Indeed, if like the land the railways had been in the hands of "the right people", the fact of being £150 million in the red wouldn't have been any trouble at all. The Government subsidises the agricultural industry to the tune of £360 million per annum and there is no word whatever of nationalising the land, planning the industry, and making it more efficient so that it can become economically self-supporting. The whole thing is in the hands of the "right people"—experts in the art of feathering their own nests, and possessed of sufficient influence to ensure that there is no interference with this process.[1] Such gentlemen cannot be expected to do anything to end so lucrative a racket. Another great source of wealth accruing to the "right people" is the fact that death duties on land are only 45 per cent of what is exacted from other types of property. This does not mean much to the small man, of course, but to men like the Duke of Buccleuch, the Duke of Sutherland, and the like who own immense areas of land this is of course an immensely important privilege which they have sufficient influence to preserve.

"Wrapt in Mystery"

They have no difficulty in doing so. Most people know nothing of these matters. The Labour Party is concentrated on the big industrial centres and knows or cares little or nothing about rural matters. It is not in the agricultural areas that their voting strength is concentrated. Even so, the lucky beneficiaries of this incredible state of affairs see to it that it remains "wrapt in mystery". The facts and figures in regard to land-owning are subjected to an impenetrable "conspiracy of silence". At the beginning of this century, Winston Churchill and

[1] This must not be read as implying outright condemnation of subsidies. Subsidising agriculture is necessary because of the way it has been and is being exploited by monopoly capitalism, but too large a part goes to people who do not need it. Our policy, of course, is to nationalise the land of the large landowners—not to nationalise the farms.

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Lloyd George promised a new "Domesday Book". The project petered out at once. Nothing more has ever been heard of it, and it is impossible, or very difficult indeed, to procure the necessary facts and figures. No wonder the general public is hoodwinked all along the line. They know nothing—and can learn little or nothing—about the bare-faced robbery of the public purse which is maintaining all these gentry in undreamt-of luxury, and, at the same time, denying the real landworkers any chance of getting a place of their own or finding agricultural employment for their sons, or arresting the tremendous drain of emigration, or keeping meat prices at a fair level. The beneficiaries of the present policy do nothing in return of any benefit to the country. They are simply parasites, maintained at the public's expense by surreptitious methods, and it is high time an end was put to the whole racket.

Government Control

Nationalisation is not necessary or desirable, but the Government should take control of the farms and see that they are let at a reasonable rent to practical farmers, and not used merely as holiday escape places or for grouse-shooting and other sports. Even yet there would be no difficulty under such conditions of securing proper tenants for them without any subsidies at all. There are still plenty of men brought up to life on such farms who would do anything to secure the tenancy of such places and run them properly, instead of being driven off the land and forced into becoming policemen, lorry-drivers and the like. But unless this is done soon, it will be too late, and Scotland will have lost forever a vital element of its population.

All will not be lost of the vast expenditure lavished in recent years on the people who have benefited from the unexampled Government indulgence. Splendidly equipped farmhouses and cottages, all with modern conveniences, electric light, hot and cold water, often telephones, and led to by good macadamised roads, are available. Nobody suggests doing anything with regard to the hard-working dairy or crop farmer—they have to work for their living—but the hill-sheep farmers should be restored to their proper place in our rural economy, and the non-working and vastly over-indulged business men and worthless sons of business men who have cashed in—and how!—on this lamentable state of affairs should be ousted and the whole business put on a proper economic basis no matter how many pretentious "country gentlemen" are thereby shorn of their totally undeserved—and nationally ruinous—privileges.

Discussion contributions on:

Inflation and All-That

Maurice Dobb

AT the time that Marx wrote, the monetary systems of the main capitalist countries were commodity-money systems, and were linked to one another in a single international system because the same commodity (gold) served as money for all of them. This remained true, indeed, of the whole pre-first world war period: a period which happened to be that of British predominance as the leading capitalist Power, with London as the world financial and monetary centre.

In this period, accordingly, monetary events, including movements in the general level of prices, were properly treated as being determined, by and large, by the general law of value—that is, by the same principle as governed the prices and price-movements of *individual* commodities in relation to one another (e.g. wheat or leather in relation to iron and cotton and bricks and coal and wood). Indeed, even prior to Marx, the economist Ricardo regarded it as one of his crucial innovations (compared with his predecessors) that he had brought money itself *within* the circle of commodities so far as movements of prices were concerned.

There were certain qualifications to be made in applying the law of value to the money-commodity: in particular, the total *stock* of gold in use in monetary hoards (e.g. the reserves of banks) was always large in relation to the annual output of it from the mines, so that changes in conditions of production were likely to be much slower in exerting an influence upon the exchange-value of gold (or the general price-level of other commodities measured in terms of money) than was the case with ordinary commodities. For the same or analogous reasons changes in banking practices (e.g. regarding reserve-ratios and metallic backing for note-issues) could exert an independent influence lasting for a considerable period. None the less, so long as a commodity-

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money prevailed, the general laws governing commodity values applied to money itself (and hence to the general price-level) as a *long-period tendency*. It could be said that the difference was merely that the long-period was longer than with ordinary (i.e. non-money) commodities.

It is well known that the first world war struck the first, and perhaps crucial, blow both to the traditional pre-war gold standard and to the City of London's pre-eminence as a world financial and banking centre; and the economic crisis in the middle of the inter-war period dealt the second and fatal blow. A single international monetary system ceased to exist; as did also a commodity-money system for most countries within the capitalist orbit, including our own (although the U.S.A. continued to adhere to it). Since then, as Emile Burns rightly points out (*Marxism Today*, December 1964)—and this is fundamental for understanding—the monetary systems of this and most other capitalist countries, ceasing to be commodity-money systems, can no longer be regarded as subject in major respects to the classical law of value. In other words, they must be regarded as falling within what Marx would have called the category of market price.

The Law of Value

Lest this should all sound very scholastic, we may ask the question: What does it *mean* to say that the price of this or that commodity is or is not "regulated by the law of value"? Shortly, the answer is that when one speaks of something as being so regulated, one means that it is controlled by impersonal market forces, which in their turn are regulated by conditions and circumstances of production. In this sense, they are "objectively" determined (in a well-known phrase of Hegel, what happens is "something quite different from what anyone intends or directly knows and wills").

Even, however, in situations where things are not determined in this way, it may still remain true that they are regulated by "objective economic forces" to a large extent (even to a major extent), in the sense that no individual, be it a private capitalist, firm or government, can make the price anything he pleases. But it may be that the economic forces in question mainly lie within the sphere of exchange (e.g. demand-conditions) rather than in the sphere of production (e.g. cost in labour and existing productive capacity). Thus, it might be thought that a monopolist, being free from competition in his own line, could make the price what he liked. But in fact we know that his power over price is limited. Although he has the power to raise price above what it would otherwise be, and monopoly-price accordingly is not "regulated by the law of value" in any direct way, this price-raising power is limited by demand conditions (if he wants to maximise his profits) and by the existence of at-least-partial substitutes for what he sells.

It follows that, with regard to the *general* level of prices in the present epoch, such influences as the degree of monopoly, fiscal policies of governments (not only taxation but also levels of expenditure), the rate of increase of demand in relation to that of productive capacity and of labour productivity, can exert a powerful influence, as the article of Emile Burns rightly emphasises. In my opinion, however, he takes too partial a view of the causes of inflation in laying primary emphasis on government policy and goes to the extreme of "subjectivism" in suggesting that the rise in retail prices has been consciously engineered with the intention of reducing real wages ("though in part due to the economic working of capitalism . . . was mainly due to the deliberate action of successive governments"). It would be nice if everything were as simple as all that; but if it were, it, surely, would not be Marxism!

The Present Epoch

I believe that we have to look deeper into the characteristics of the present epoch and to see the problem of inflation against the background of them. In other words, I *would* lay primary emphasis, in explaining inflation, upon the "economic working of capitalism" (which the Burns statement, just quoted, relegates to a minor place); although not the traditional working of capitalism, but capitalism as it operates in the *new and changed objective situation characteristic of the present epoch.*

It will be remembered that the Twentieth Congress resolution spoke of the "main feature of our epoch" as being "the emergence of socialism from within the bounds of a single country and its transformation into a world system" (to which it added "the disintegration of the imperialist colonial system now taking place"—"a post-war development of history-making significance").

In the 1957 Moscow declaration we read:

> "In our epoch world development is determined by the course and results of the competition between two diametrically opposed social systems".

And the 1960 declaration further stated:

> "It is the *principal characteristic of our time that the world socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the development of society.* . . . Today it is the world socialist system and the forces fighting against imperialism, for a socialist transformation of society, that determines *the main content, main trend and main features of the historical development of society*" [italics mine—M.D.].

Some readers may think that this is a long way from the question in hand. I believe that they are mistaken. One thing that the changed balance of forces in Europe (and elsewhere in the world) has done is to strengthen considerably the position of the working class in the system of social relations of

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production in a number of capitalist countries, including our own. There can, surely, be little doubt that the existence of the socialist sector as a world force greatly strengthens the influence of organised labour in capitalist countries in all kinds of indirect ways? Another thing it has done is to make the capitalist class (or at least important sections of it—for we must avoid the fallacy of the "homogeneous reactionary mass") more scared of allowing certain things to happen that would play into the hands of its enemies politically, and more keen to prevent their own system from faltering—if possible, indeed, to keep it moving and expanding, lest if it doesn't it may start running downhill. In recent years there has come to be developed quite an ideology of economic growth in Western Europe and America, perhaps more consciously connected in U.S.A. or West Germany with "the competition between two social systems" than it is in this country.

Government Action and Unemployment

True, this has resulted in more government action —greater readiness to see the capitalist State doing more, even if this means treading on the toes of individual capitalists. But it does not necessarily mean action in the narrow sense of imposing taxes to lower real wages. After all, this could be as suicidal as trying to slash money wages, once the masses had got wise to what was happening; and it is not immediately clear why capitalists should prefer the former method to the latter.

One feature of the post-war period has been the expansion of government *expenditure*, both absolutely and relatively, partly on account of military expenditure, but not exclusively so. Another feature has been the high and sustained level of investment (gross), partly encouraged by the technological innovations of the present period, partly by conscious policy—fiscal, credit and monetary policy. This high level of both governmental and investment expenditure has undoubtedly led to a fairly sustained condition of excess demand for capital goods, and hence a rising price-tendency in this sector, to which Emile Burns's article draws attention. But it has also served to maintain the general level of economic activity, and with it of employment, which has resulted in a high level of demand for consumer goods also—a level of demand which has tended to be ahead of the productive capacity of this sector of industry.

The upshot is that the traditional instrument whereby wages were kept down (and reduced if they had risen "too high" in a boom-phase) no longer operates, or is at least considerably blunted—namely, the periodic re-creation of the industrial reserve army. (This is not universally true, of course: in America unemployment has been steadily growing over the past ten years; in Italy there is unemployment, mainly in the south; Western Germany has surplus labour, due to the influx of so-called "refugees", although this state of the labour-market is now coming to an end.) Whether this is due to a conscious realisation that capitalism cannot afford in the present epoch to allow mass unemployment as in the '30s, or simply an "unconscious" result of the factors mentioned in the last paragraph—this we need not discuss here, interesting though it is as a question in its own right. But it does mean that capitalism today is more prone to crises of an inflationary type than to crises of the traditional deflationary type.

Elsewhere (in a lecture reprinted in *Science and Society* for Spring 1964) I tried to summarise the position in this way. "In the classic period of capitalism . . . the labour market was characterised by a chronic state of surplus supply—by the existence of a reserve army of labour. Labour scarcity or full employment was an exceptional occurrence even in years of boom. Moreover, the existence of this reserve army was the classic method whereby any upward pressure of wage rates at the expense of profits was resisted. For the system, the existence (or if need be the re-creation) of this reserve acted as an automatic safety-valve. A leading characteristic of the situation since the second world war has been that, for a number of reasons . . . this condition of the labour market has radically changed. The unemployed reserve army has shrunk compared with pre-war days; and even where it has persisted, trade unions have been in a sufficiently strong position to maintain or even raise wages in the organised sectors of the economy. . . .

"I submit that there is in most countries a significant quantitative difference from former times in the balance of economic and social relations, and that this difference, combined with the high level of demand in product markets (due to high government spending, a high level of investment and a raised level of total consumption) underlies the inflationary situation which has become chronic over so large a part of the so-called 'western world'. Today, it would seem, fairly constant inflationary pressure instead of periodic deflationary tides has become the rule."

Effect of Inflation

Here there is a sense in which the emphasis of Emile Burns's article can be regarded as a correct one—in an "as if" sense. For there can be no doubt that the *effect* of inflation is to reduce real wages (rates, if not earnings) to the extent that there is a lag of money-wages behind the price-rise. Hence it operates as an *alternative mechanism* for keeping wages from encroaching upon surplus value. This is not to say, however, that it can be pursued as a conscious policy for very long, since it can have

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disorganising and damaging effects alike upon the market-structure and the production-structure of capitalism. And to speak of it as having the *effect* of an alternative mechanism for restricting wages is not the same thing as treating it as consciously designed government policy and as due mainly to tax-policy. This, as I have suggested, puts the whole matter in much too narrow a setting.

After all, we have to appreciate that the way in which the average capitalist looks at the matter is that a period of inflation is one of easy profits for himself—a period of sellers' market when he can pass on every rise of costs (and something more) in higher prices, both take up industrial slack and edge-up his profit-margins. Since he is habitually unused to thinking in terms of Marxism, it is, surely, a bit tortuous to imagine him thinking it out, *first* that inflation is a cunning way of reducing real wages, and *then* from this deducing that the share of surplus value and profits in total output must rise in consequence! I just don't believe the average business man thinks in this way, and I doubt whether even Tory Cabinet Ministers or civil servants do either. But there is a further consideration, which strikes me as the crucial objection to the idea of tax-policy as a conscious capitalist device for reducing real wages. To the extent that prices are jacked up by taxation (i.e. commodity-taxes) the price-rise will *not* immediately result in a rise in profit margins! The result of the price-rise will accrue to the Exchequer. To this extent it doesn't *appear* as an obvious attraction to capitalists. For price-rises engineered by taxation to be a conscious capitalist device, one has to assume *either* that capitalists are devilishly sophisticated, *or else* that they are not actuated by immediate and obvious profit-motives, but just by anti-worker bloody-mindedness.

(Incidentally, the Burns article speaks of the need to explain inflation "in terms of class interest". It is not clear whether "interest" here implies conscious motivation. But if so, I would suggest that "in terms of the class contradictions of capitalism" would be the more appropriate formulation.)

Other Inflationary Factors

If one were writing a technical article about inflation, there are other factors upon which one would, of course, enlarge. There has been a significant expansion of the credit-apparatus; and the use of medium-term credit for the financing of certain types of purchase, including purchase of capital goods. Institutions such as building societies and hire-purchase finance companies have sprung up and grown rapidly: institutions that were described and commented upon in the Radcliffe Report of a few years ago and which seem to have been not unimportant influences in weakening the effects of traditional monetary policy when the government and/or Bank of England has sought to put the brake on inflationary tendencies. Government action at times to support bond-prices (in the interest of its own future borrowing) has also served to nullify the effect of monetary policy in raising the long-term rate of interest, and hence the cost of borrowing. There is the whole story of sterling's attempt to retain some of its old position as a major international currency (convertibility and all that) and to serve as currency to the sterling area, which has made London abnormally sensitive to any balance-of-payments difficulty. So-called "trade liberalisation" and the need to step-up export of "visibles" to repair the decline in Britain's net earnings from "invisibles" have also contributed either to the danger of an unfavourable trade-balance, or to inflationary pressure in the home market. But all these influences I should regard as secondary to the more fundamental changes in the situation of capitalism (associated with the rivalry of two world systems and its impact on class relations) mentioned above.

We have referred to the degree of monopoly as being one of the influences upon the general level of prices; and it is undoubtedly true that the rate of increase of prices would have been smaller if it had not been for the increase in the degree of monopoly which has occurred over the past two decades. In certain contexts and certain sectors this is of great importance and should not be ignored (especially in the formulation of "immediate demands" for the Left). But although an important factor, it can hardly be singled out, I think, as a main factor in the continuing price-rise; even though it can exert a so-called "ratchet-effect" of keeping prices, once they have risen, from falling again even if the market situation should change.

A concluding word, by way of a footnote, on this matter of price and value of labour-power and which is below which. Once we include (as it is correct to do, of course) an historical-social (customary or conventional) element in the latter, since this becomes difficult if not impossible to measure at all precisely, I cannot see that a statement about price being lower (or higher) than value is *testable*. By this I do not mean that to talk about it is meaningless—I mean only that it cannot be *statistically* established one way or t'other (save, perhaps, very approximately in terms of some Rowntree-like standard of human needs relative to a given time and place). Emile Burns seems to take the easy way of saying that value equals the highest level real wages have ever (or recently?) reached. This strikes me, again, as too simple an answer; and I don't believe that as a definition it can really be made to stand up. In which case I'm afraid I cannot see that the size of hire-purchase debt is relevant evidence either way.

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Necessity and Chance

A. Muir

ANDREW TAYLOR is to be congratulated on his article in the December 1964 issue of *Marxism Today*, which represents a break with the regrettable reluctance to discuss problems in the philosophy of science, that has prevailed for too long now in British Marxist circles. It is, I believe, the first attempt to discuss the philosophy of physics in the pages of *Marxism Today* for some years.

Andrew Taylor rightly devotes the major part of his article to a discussion of Bohm's theories, these being the only extended, up-to-date presentation (at least in English) of a systematic philosophy of physics that is in tune with dialectical materialism.[1] Bohm's ideas, for this reason, are one of the few existing points of departure for a critical analysis of physics and it is therefore rather surprising that Andrew Taylor should refer to those ideas as coming "close to the Marxist standpoint in many respects".

Where is a detailed exposition of this Marxist standpoint to be found?

As I noted above, there has in fact been no public discussion of these questions in Britain and the writings of Bohm and his collaborators are the only sources to which a student of dialectical materialism can turn as a starting point for his investigations. It is this need for hammering out a Marxist attitude to the problems of physics that makes Andrew Taylor's article so significant.

Taylor's Criticisms of Bohm

I think, however, his criticisms of Bohm's ideas must be rejected. Bohm's division, into essential and contingent, of the factors affecting a process is proved correct by the actual development of scientific theory, for surely the progress of science does take place by investigation of those factors outside the scope of current theory and appearing as contingent, in order that they may be brought into a more comprehensive theory as well-understood causes. This is all that Bohm is proposing for the quantum theory and it is an incorrect presentation of Bohm's ideas to say:

> "If, for example, we can get rid of contingent connections which presumably make an electron behave in a statistical manner then we will be left with the determinate connections which determine the behaviour of a single electron in a unique manner."

Bohm is absolutely clear about the implications of his "qualitative infinity" of nature and has never advanced his immediate programme for a causal interpretation of quantum theory under the assumption that this would entirely remove contingencies. Were he to do so then he certainly could be accused of the crudest attempt to restore mechanical determinism, but he sees this necessary advance in physics as yet one more stage in the continual process of developing our understanding of the world, which would, in revealing qualitatively new domains of phenomena, correspondingly reveal yet further contingent factors. Thus:

> "Now I don't insist that the deeper laws will be purely determinate laws or purely statistical laws. In terms of the infinity of nature we may rather say that every law is at one stage determinate, at another stage statistical; every law leaves out an infinity of factors in lower levels. It is this fact which makes the law an approximation, which makes it statistical.
>
> But as you go deeper you see the causes of the fluctuations and thereby the law becomes determinate; but then the deeper level is in its turn subject to factors which have been left out and it will be statistical too. Hence from this point of view, every law must have both a determinate and a statistical side. To say that it must be purely determinate would be metaphysical, just as to say that it must be purely statistical would also be metaphysical."[2]

Contingent and Essential

In the example discussed by Andrew Taylor, Newton's equations can be applied to the motion of the shell, *precisely* because the chemistry of the firing process, the aerodynamics of the flight and etc., which are not describable in the Newtonian mechanical scheme can be separated out and treated as factors contingent to the problem at hand; and *precisely* because the relative degree of autonomous validity that can be ascribed to Newton's laws is a

[1] The *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* certainly gives a good general account of dialectical materialism, but does not tackle the specific problems of physics with sufficient technical detail.

[2] *Observation and Interpretation in the Philosophy of Physics*, page 60, Ed. S. Korner, Dover Publications.

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consequence of the correct recognition of what is to be considered contingent and what essential.

Newton's laws stand independently because they pay no attention to the mechanism of firing and are quite indifferent to how the initial velocity of the flight is produced. Our ability to test the flight in near vacuum and to thus confirm the Newtonian laws to a higher accuracy make the wind velocity similarly contingent.

The necessary process of conceptually isolating a system, severing its essential unity with the world and forcing a distinction between contingent and essential factors, similarly entails the fruitful distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties, a distinction which Andrew Taylor clearly regards as acceptable and useful. One must not make the error, however, of believing that such a severance can be made arbitrarily, according to our personal whims. Our ability to study the infinite complexity of the world piece-by-piece reflects its real, objective division into levels of phenomena and the existence of relatively stable complexes of phenomena which can be isolated and treated as "things in themselves possessing intrinsic properties".

In such a short note I have only been able to touch on the differences I have with Andrew Taylor's article since these, I feel, are more likely to promote the controversy which is urgently needed for the development of dialectical materialism. To put the record straight and to balance my adverse comments I must repeat that in general I am completely in accord with the spirit of his article and most of the points it makes, and can only welcome its appearance.

Marxism and Morality

John Lewis

MARTIN MILLIGAN raises some useful questions in his article on Marxism and Morality in the January issue of *Marxism Today*. It is good to have the notion that Marxism has no standards other than class interests, and confuses 'right' with whatever is latest in evolutionary development, plainly refuted. Milligan makes it clear that Marxism has very definite criteria for deciding whether what is later is better or worse. He has also done a useful job in taking up the question of "ends and means" once more, and after some equivocation finally deciding that it may be necessary to break the general moral rule lest a worse evil befall.

So far so good, but I am not sure that confusion does not sometimes creep into this thoughtful essay, so that the questions raised become rather more obscure than clearer by the time we get to the end. This appears to be due to getting too far away from everyday reality and rather lost in the world of abstractions. Is Marxism really as abstruse and difficult a subject as Martin Milligan seems to make it? Not, I think, if we remember that truth is always concrete and never abstract.

Three fundamental questions emerge in this discussion:

1. Do we base Marxist ethics on the satisfaction of human needs or on the realisation of the "essence" of man in freedom?
2. Is the "essence" of man found in certain inherent characteristics (either good or bad) or does man "make himself" by creating and then re-creating the social order so that his essence is "the ensemble of his social relations"?
3. Is right conduct obedience to the moral law regardless of consequences, or is it that course of action which, on balance, produces the best consequences?

I do not think these questions can be answered by quoting single texts from Marx, especially from his early unpublished writings; what we have to do is to understand how the whole exposition of social and human development in Marx's writings clarifies the issue.

1(*a*). Let us first consider the question of the importance for Marxism of finding out how to satisfy *basic human needs*—such fundamental things as food, shelter, health, companionship, leisure and family security. Marxism begins with precisely this demand. It does not spring from some attempt to realise the "essence" of human nature as Milligan believes. Marx energetically repudiated this point of view in the *German Ideology*, in the *Communist Manifesto*, and again and again in his writings. It is the mistake of what was known as "true Socialism", and all forms of utopian idealism. Nor does Marxism spring from the idea of maximising "freedom". "Freedom" is the principle of "every man for him-

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self", of "free enterprise", on which Adam Smith, Bentham and Mill based capitalism. Freedom is an abstract conception that sounds noble but can mean anything. It only begins to mean something when we ask: freedom *for whom*? freedom *for what*? For the Marxist it begins to signify something to fight for only when it is freedom for the great mass of working people to secure the necessities of life—*to satisfy their needs*.

Milligan calls this "utilitarianism". But Marx was not a utilitarian, though it is precisely in this way that he lays down the foundation of his great work.

> "We must begin by stating the first premise of all human existence, and therefore of all history, the premise namely that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history'. But life involves before everything else, eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself." (*The German Ideology*)

Note particularly—"to satisfy these needs".

It might not matter what name we gave to Marx's theory, but it does so happen that "utilitarianism", bitterly castigated by Marx as the typical philosophy of the money-grubbing bourgeoisie, has a very definite meaning in the history of social and political ideas, and should therefore not be misapplied.

It is "the view that the right act is the one which will produce the greatest amount of pleasure. It received its classical form in Bentham and Mill".[1] The writer goes on to explain that this was intended by Bentham and Mill to provide the philosophical basis for the economic doctrine that every man should be granted the maximum freedom to pursue his individual interests in his own way—the essential theory of capitalist individualism. This has nothing to do with the satisfaction of basic human needs, except in so far as it came to frustrate them in developed capitalism and to deny their satisfaction in the cruel days of early industrialism. This is very far from freedom for the great mass of men and women. It is the kind of freedom that creates a great mass of unfreedom out of the initial freedom of the economic individual.

As long as an owning class controls the means of life, as long as the capitalist system fetters the forces of production, we are not free to satisfy our needs, and all exhortations to men to "treat one another as free beings" will be in vain—to use Marx's phrase, only "so much worthless earnestness". We shall not be free in any real sense until we own the means of production and can organise production for consumption. Then and then only shall we be free from unemployment, low wages, economic crises, capitalist dictatorship, the irresistible laws of capitalist economics; free to expand production to satisfy our needs—first our basic needs and then our ever-growing needs for culture, leisure, health and so forth.

We do not get an inch nearer this freedom by proclaiming that the essence of human nature is "freedom", that "humaneness" is the great ideal which we must preach to men.

1(*b*). Let us look once again at these human needs, for Martin Milligan is worried by the difficulty of deciding which needs are valid and which are not. Of course these needs have to be determined in every period and in every society. They cannot be catalogued except in general terms. Beyond the elementary needs of all human existence we now need foreign holidays, TV sets, guitars and motor bikes, among other necessities. And, of course, there are people, as Milligan says, who think that they need drugs, or "need" to inflict pain on others, or need a privileged position in society, or need dividends and rents and profits. Now because there is no authoritative information obtainable about what is good and what is bad, or about what men need, which is the same thing, it is no use giving up the job of doing our best to decide which needs are valid and which are not. The overwhelming majority know perfectly well what their needs are and what needs are abnormal and anti-social. Disputed needs are some of them settled by science, medicine for example, which established the need for vitamins etc. Other disputed needs are eventually settled by experience and discussion, or remain open questions for some time. The fact that all needs must be settled by men themselves on the basis of their own experience does not mean that we cannot make their satisfaction our main task. If we are asked how it is possible to "prove" that it is better to be healthy than diseased, to have enough food rather than to starve, to live rather than to die, to be free from pain rather than to suffer, we reply that most sensible people would be puzzled that anyone should require proof, and would regard it as of more importance to consider how these basic needs can be attained rather than sit down to argue as to whether they are valid. We rightly suspect, if not the motives, at least the social consequences of prolonged philosophising about whether a drug addict's "need" discredits the whole notion of satisfying the need of men for food, on the ground that after all they are both "needs". Questions of this sort come from an ideology of endless argument and abstract discussion which is in the interest of the *status quo* and actually holds back man's advance to the satisfaction of his fundamental requirements.

2. This brings us to our second question: What is the *essence* of man? Let us take up the theme as first stated by Marx. All economic life begins in

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[1]. *Dictionary of Philosophy*. Dagobert Runes.

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"the production of the means to satisfy human needs", hence we consider first the tools and techniques of such production and the method of organising human labour appropriate to the level of this technical equipment. This gives us the economic system with its pattern of social relationships. The economic system necessarily changes as technology and science develop. Thus we have a series of social systems, each with its own economic basis and its own pattern of social relationships—slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism. These are successive and increasingly successful ways of satisfying human needs, and each system of social relationships produces a different type of humane person. Human nature is always changing. It has no permanent essence.

Two important conclusions are drawn by Marx from all this:

1. On each economic basis is erected the cultural and legal super-structure, which includes *the moral principles of the period.* Morality is not therefore based on absolute principles which drop from heaven, but is relative to the needs of the class society at each stage, and finally to the classless society of socialism. It appears to me that Milligan completely overlooks this basis of the moral code and its dependent relation on the class system.
2. At each level *man's nature* is determined by the particular structure of social relationships. There is no such thing, as Milligan asserts, as an "essence" of man. On the contrary "man makes himself", and then remakes himself by remaking society. Capitalism, however, not only makes the type of man that works the system, but brings into existence the class-conscious worker who fights to change it. The "essence" of man, which Milligan thinks should determine our moral aims, simply does not exist. The nature of man, said Marx, "is the ensemble of social relations". Man under feudalism is one sort of man, man under capitalism quite another sort, man under socialism changes his nature yet again. Man makes himself.

If anyone says, we know all this, I reply, I wish we did. If that were so we should not so often talk about the inherent aggressiveness of human nature, or declare that the "essence" of human nature was "freedom", or call for "humaneness" as the answer to all our problems, as if one way or the other there were a definitive, recognisable and permanent pattern for human nature.

3. A last word on the question of *universal moral rules*, or *absolute moral standards*. Those that are really universal (but not absolute) are the socially necessary injunctions to truthfulness, kindness, honesty and so forth. They arise out of social experience because without them men cannot live together. While generally useful we may have to set them aside to avoid a worse evil than that involved by breaking them, as when we tell a lie to save a man's life from a criminal or from an enemy in war.

Marxism rightly suspects very general principles like "love" or "the fulfilment of personality" because they can be interpreted in so many different ways as to be meaningless. Love is for many people compatible with slavery, racial discrimination, capitalism, class privilege and so on. Hence no good is achieved simply by preaching "love". You have to be specific. A moral ideal that is in fact meaningless because it can justify anything is useless. Therefore we have always to think in concrete and not in abstract terms and adopt the line of conduct that produces on balance the most good, even if that means breaking generally useful rules. This is what we did when we went to fight in Spain, or when the Russians defended the Revolution against military intervention, setting aside the rule that life is sacred.

Martin Milligan appears to be confused here; first of all he says that I am wrong to say that an issue of this sort is to be settled by choosing the lesser evil, that is to say by balancing the consequences—the good to be secured on the one hand, and the cost in suffering on the other. Apparently if we must not do that we must obey the moral law regardless of the consequences.

But having questioned this formulation Milligan reverses the argument on the very next page and says that it is necessary sometimes to hurt people "if it is to prevent people being more seriously hurt". In other words he sets aside the moral law because the consequences of doing so are better than the consequences of keeping it. He goes on to say that we are "morally obliged to violate respect for life when it is absolutely clear that a great deal more harm would be done by adhering to such principles than by violating them". What is this but judging what is right not by whether absolute moral laws are kept but by the consequences? And isn't this exactly what Marxists have always believed and tried to practise?

The greatest moral issue of all is that raised by the conflict between the "needs" of the owning class and the needs of the great mass of working people. Here are two conflicting moralities, for privilege can always find moral principles to justify its claims. But only the realisation of working class aims makes possible a truly human morality, because only when class divisions are overcome by the total disappearance of an owning class can we begin to speak of the satisfaction of the needs and interests of all. That is why the demands of the struggle to abolish class domination lay upon us the highest of

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all moral duties. There can be no more moral task than to end for ever that class society which frustrates all our aims. For Marxism the supreme moral task of our age is the liberation of men from exploitation—the restoration of a really human society, that is to say "an association in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all".

Franz Loeser

COMRADE MILLIGAN'S stimulating article as well as the discussion on Comrade Schaff's book *Philosophy of Man*, have led me to write the following discussion contribution. Continuing the 1958 ethics discussion, Milligan very convincingly argues against the view that the criterion of judging moral actions or comparing moral codes can be individual desire or need. His point is that Marxist ethics compares and evaluates moral development in the last instance with respect to the contribution it makes towards human freedom. This raises, of course, the further question of what is to be understood by freedom?

Although the author's remarks on this point are not always quite clear and could give rise to some misinterpretation, no Marxist could quarrel with his position if he bases himself on Engels' definition of freedom given in *Anti-Dühring*. For Engels the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom lies in man's understanding and mastery of the laws of his own social actions. As Marx and Engels were the first to discover these laws, they were also the first to develop a truly scientific criterion on which to judge moral development. The extent to which moral development contributes towards man's growing understanding and mastery over the laws of his own social actions, or, in other words, towards the growth of freedom and social progress, determines in the last instance its value for mankind. This is precisely what I had in mind when I stated in the 1958 discussion that the worth of moral actions must ultimately be evaluated by the extent to which they contribute towards man's understanding and ability to conform to the laws of social development.

I agree with Comrade Milligan, that a discussion about such basic theoretical questions as the general criterion by which moral development can be judged is important, because it gives communists some general guidance in their struggle. Yet the use of such general criteria, like that of all general definitions, is strictly limited. In the first place they explain only in the most general terms the value of specific moral actions, and secondly they cannot give concrete guidance for the solution of the numerous and complicated moral problems facing communists in their daily struggle for socialism. That is why a discussion about these general theoretical problems should try to show how the two aspects of Marxist ethics, the basic theoretical questions and the solution of the practical moral problems, are related to each other. The great value of Schaff's book is that he tries to do precisely that. In his review of the book, W. Ash has very ably pointed out the author's many important and original ideas. The review does not however touch upon the more controversial questions of the book, which in my opinion equally deserve a full discussion. Because of lack of space I shall therefore confine my remarks about this book solely to some of these questions.

Democratic Centralism still Valid?

Schaff raises the vital question of the possible conflict between party decision or party discipline, and the opinion of the individual communist. The validity of the principle of democratic centralism that party unity and party decisions must prevail against personal misgivings is, according to Schaff, "only an assumption" (p. 79). Schaff feels that when such a conflict arises

> "The solution is in each case a matter of the given individual, and can be found only by himself. If one arrives at the subjective certainty that an action is so wrong and harmful as to injure the aims of the party, then moral responsibility demands dissociation from a party decision in the concrete case and action in accordance with one's own conviction" (p. 79).

I do not want to belittle the complexity of the problem, but if we are prepared to accept Schaff's solution that it is the moral responsibility of the individual communist to dissociate himself from party decisions every time he personally disagrees with them, then we give up the principles of democratic centralism, the very principles which make the Marxist party the only force capable of leading the fight for socialism.

Apparently, the reason for Schaff's view is that to submit to party decisions, when one disagrees with them, is to renounce one's responsibility for the party policy (see p. 78). But is this really true? Democratic centralism means precisely that each communist has not only the right but also the moral duty to fight for his views inside (not outside) the party organisation.

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In this way, each individual communist fully shares responsibility for the party's decisions and its policy. Yet when, after a democratic discussion, the majority has taken a decision, it is not only the moral responsibility of the individual communist to abide by these decisions, he must also help to carry them out. Schaff makes a serious mistake when he claims that the validity of this principle "is only an assumption". Of course, nobody can force an individual to accept this principle. We communists accept it voluntarily because we have learned from our experiences of the class struggle, particularly from the failures of the social democratic parties, that this type of party organisation is, as Lenin repeatedly stressed, absolutely necessary to build socialism. Its validity has been tested and proven in the course of history by every Marxist party in the world.

Do Marxists Doubt Everything?

Schaff goes on to say that the problem which appears at the bottom of this conflict is one between collective discipline and the search for truth. Human beings, individually and collectively, are fallible and that is, so Schaff believes, why Marx proclaimed methodological scepticism—everything is to be doubted—as his basic method (p. 80).

I am not aware that in any of the writings of either Marx, Engels or Lenin the principle of methodological scepticism has been acclaimed as the basic method of Marxism. The scientific method of Marxism is its materialist dialectics, which explains the progress of human knowledge as the development from lesser to greater relative truths. Neither the individual scientist or Marxist, least of all Marx, nor the Marxist party, starts its search for truth by doubting everything. We do not doubt, for instance, that Marxist teachings about the class struggle or Lenin's principle of democratic centralism are absolutely correct within a concrete historical period of human development. Every Marxist party must, in its attempt to creatively develop Marxist thought, base itself on this knowledge. Yet we do not accept that the theory of the class struggle or the principle of democratic centralism are eternal truths. With the progress of society, new social relations and with them new principles governing human conduct will necessarily arise, so that historically speaking, the theory of the class struggle and the principle of democratic centralism constitute relative truths. The understanding of the relativity of truth and its dialectical development is something quite different from the belief that Marxists must start their search for truth by "doubting everything". To make methodological scepticism the basic principle of Marxism would not only negate the scientific struggle for socialism, it would destroy Marxism itself. I am quite certain that Schaff would be the last to favour such a course.

Although Schaff's treatment of the problem of the search for truth is very stimulating, I believe him to be wrong when he sees the search for truth by the individual communist as being contradicted by party discipline. Of course in individual cases difficulties may arise, but generally speaking, the individual communist deepens his Marxist knowledge not in opposing party decisions or by not accepting party discipline, but by taking part in the struggle for socialism as a disciplined member of his party. The reason for this is that the search for truth is not a passive reflection of reality but an inseparable part of man's struggle for social progress. It is therefore no accident that one repeatedly finds that a comrade who refuses to accept party discipline and ceases to fight for party policy, also ceases to be a Marxist.

Schaff is perfectly right, when he says that not only individuals but also Marxist parties are not infallible. But the collective opinion of the Marxist parties tends to make fewer mistakes and see further than the individual member. This is another reason why the search for truth of the individual communist must be part of the collective discussion and the common struggle of his party.

Can Marxist Ethics Formulate Moral Codes?

In chapter 9 Schaff states that the formulation of moral codes cannot be the function of Marxist ethics, because it would be an illusion to believe that moral difficulties of building socialism "may be overcome by some kind of new moral code, and that it is only a matter of laying down the rules" (p. 83). Schaff goes on to say: ". . . moral codes arise from life as specific reflections in human consciousness of existing social relations, and so cannot be composed or decreed at will" (p. 83). Furthermore, Schaff implies, that moral standards have always been imposed on man from the outside or from above, and therefore had a religious character, and in socialist and communist society where man is master of his own destiny, it is impossible to lay down moral standards (*see* p. 83).

Schaff's view raises philosophical and political problems of profound importance. If Schaff is correct then it would seem that the theory and practice of the twenty-second Party Congress of the C.P.S.U. in formulating the moral code of the "builders of communism" or of the fifth and sixth Party Congress of the German S.E.D. in putting forward the "ten laws of socialist morality" is basically wrong. Let us examine Schaff's arguments.

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One must agree with Schaff that it is an illusion to assume that moral difficulties can be overcome by merely formulating moral codes. Yet who is suffering from such an illusion? The formulation of the moral codes referred to was certainly never conceived with the naive idea that it would automatically solve the moral problems of socialist society. What actually is being claimed is that the formulation of socialist moral codes is a very important and indispensable method in helping people consciously to rid themselves of bourgeois morality and to develop the new socialist moral relations. Social practice in the S.U. and the G.D.R. have abundantly proven this step to be a correct one.

Schaff's view that moral codes have always been imposed on man from above and therefore had a religious character is not correct either. Possibly he confuses the fact that the ruling classes, e.g. the bourgeoisie, have often tried to impose their morality by giving their moral codes religious sanctions, with the nature of working class morality. Working class morality, as propagated by the Marxist party, is neither imposed on the working class "from above", nor has it a religious character. It is in fact the conscious understanding of the moral qualities, relations, ideals, etc., necessary for the successful struggle for building socialism, based on the scientific knowledge of the laws of social development. The principles of proletarian internationalism which were consciously formulated by Marx and Engels already in the Communist Manifesto, and have been progressively enriched by the experience of our international communist movement, are a vivid example of the fact that the formulation of socialist moral codes is not an imposition on the working class "from above" but a conscious understanding of social necessity. The formulation of these principles certainly does not automatically solve our moral problems, but they are a vital guide to action, a tremendous motive force of our struggle. I believe that this contradicts Schaff's view that the formulation of moral principles cannot or must not be the function of Marxist ethics.

The Formulation of Moral Codes in Socialist Society

It is an objective law of social development that the role of morality is constantly increasing in the course of the development towards communist society. The need for the conscious understanding and the formulation of the moral qualities and relations necessary for the social progress towards communism grows accordingly. I will try to illustrate this with an example. The building of socialism requires long-term economic planning ten or twenty years ahead of our time. Today the socialist countries educate the people who will have to carry out the economic projects of the future. It is therefore essential not only to know the kind of scientific knowledge and technical skills but also the moral qualities which the new generation will need to put these plans into practice. Neither the technical skills nor the moral qualities which the new generation requires to build communism can be decreed at will.

In this respect there is no disagreement with Schaff. Yet this does not mean that the moral qualities necessary for the building of communism cannot or should not be consciously recognised and formulated. Quite the contrary, on the basis of our knowledge of social progress, we can conclude the necessary moral qualities and relations and formulate them in the form of moral rules, concepts and ideals. In this way socialist morality becomes a scientific and indispensable method for the development of the new socialist personality without which progress towards communism is impossible. Here, too, the scientific method of formulating socialist moral codes is not to be understood as a dogmatic imposition of moral rules on the people "from above", but as man's conscious understanding of the moral qualities and relations necessary for the building of socialism and communism.

I do not want to belittle the complexity of the problems involved in developing scientific methods for the formulation of moral rules and concepts, for the "planning" of the socialist moral qualities and relations. It requires the application of logic, cybernetics, sociology, psychology, etc., to the solution of these problems and I believe that we are only just beginning to witness new and tremendously exciting fields opening up for Marxist ethics. Yet to deny Marxist ethics the function and the ability to formulate moral rules and concepts would not, as Schaff believes, prove man's ability to shape his own destiny, but quite the contrary, rob socialist man of one of his most important means of extending his mastery over the social forces.

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Trotskyism in Britain Today

Bob Williamson

I WAS pleased to read Comrade Betty Reid's article on "Trotskyism in Britain Today" in September *Marxism Today*.

The history of Trotskyism, to which I feel Betty Reid paid too much attention, is very complex. The Trotskyite groups differ bitterly among themselves as to their pasts, and as time goes on and sects vanish and reappear, it becomes more and more difficult to sort the history out. The full role of Trotsky himself in the Soviet Union is also complex; people who are *completely* bad do not become, as Trotsky did, foreign ministers of the Soviet Union and leading members of the Bolshevik Central Committee, at times leading majorities against Lenin. I would not agree with the article that the question of the Trotskyite trials is only the responsibility of the Soviet historians either—our Party, too, devoted very many pages of books and pamphlets and hours of speeches to defending these same trials. I am sure comrades will have read what I regard as the excellent statement in Togliatti's last testament on this and related points.

Still, these questions of history, whose-ever responsibility they may be, will be sorted out by historians in the years ahead, one hopes in detail and with integrity. We know now that we are not called upon to defend everything that happens, or has happened in the past, in countries trying to build socialism under desperate conditions in a single generation. The question we must face is the answer to the present political line, with its many errors, of the left-sectarian groups in Britain today.

I feel the emphasis of Comrade Reid's article is too much on attempting an answer to the sort of sterile questions the Trotskyites raise, as to forgotten organisations and long-dead men. It is more important to analyse the reasons for the present increase in Trotskyite activity, for while the ultra-left is still small, numbering perhaps some 2,000 in all, it now has considerable influence, at branch and national level, in the "Young Socialists".

Actually, I dislike the word "Trotskyism" in connection with the groups we are discussing; some of them oppose most of the tenets which Trotsky put forward in the period 1927-1940. Some non-Trotskyite groups, such as some sections of the "Committee to Defeat Revisionism", are closer in policy to the "Revolutionary Workers' Party" than is the "R.W.P." to any of the other Trotskyite groups. Similarly, the anarcho-syndicalist group editing *Solidarity*, and in some areas the "Committee of 100" leadership, are quite closely allied with the "International Socialism" group (which, incidentally, is usually called the "state capitalist" group, as this is the centrepoint of their theory).

There are two dangers, as I see it, to Marxists-Leninists from Trotskyist groups. First, the Trotskyist groups recruit many sincere young people (particularly when there are strong political and social pressures which make it easier to be a "non-Communist revolutionary" than a Communist), use them fanatically for some months or years, and then abandon them to a cynicism and despair born of continual bitter interfactional wrangling and fruitless super-revolutionary activity. Second, serious political and organisational setbacks often occur when a Trotskyite group actually wins influence within a working class organisation.

The first danger is particularly clear in what is happening at the moment within the "Young Socialists". *Keep Left*, the journal (and youth group) of the Socialist Labour League, recruits youngsters at 15 and 16 and fills them with what for each of them is a fervent, if sectarian, enthusiasm. They are working at political action (often of the most factional kind, directed against the other Trotskyite groups, or against the Communist Party and Y.C.L.) for seven evenings a week, always promised that the revolution is just around the corner. After six months of this, even the most naive person begins to ask why the revolution has not materialised; why, in spite of his great sacrifices, we are no nearer to socialism than before he started. Unless completely swept up in the *esprit de corps* of the tight-knot group in which he finds himself, he usually retires, at the age of 17 or 18, to an embittered political future, anti-Communist, anti-Labour and above all, anti-Trotskyite. (Any psychiatrist wishing to study pathological hatred should talk to ex-Keep Lefters about their former comrades, or to Keep Lefters about other Trotskyites.) Impatience with the hard grind of real politics brings him into the Trotskyite movement and exhaustion drives him out.

It is when a Trotskyite organisation, and particularly the Socialist Labour League, wins influence within the working class movement that one can evaluate its politics in practice. This has happened from time to time; considering the fantastic effort the S.L.L. put into their organisation it is significant (and a credit to the intelligence of the organised working class) that it happens only so seldom. Such strength as they have is among casual workers,

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as would be expected. The classic example of S.L.L. activity in recent years was the South Bank building workers' strike, which led to the smashing of the trade union organisation on the site, as the workers left the picket lines (and their unions) in disgust at super-militant "allies" who flocked to join them.

I single out the Socialist Labour League for several reasons. It is the largest of the Trotskyite groups, with, I understand, about 1,000 members. (The two British groups associated with the Fourth International, and their left-wing breakaway group the Revolutionary Workers' Party, all have memberships in dozens rather than the hundreds, while the "International Socialism" group, with a membership of several hundreds, is a much looser organisation than any of the others.) Much more important, the S.L.L. is the only Trotskyite group with a national organisation, effective press and any working class support. The other groups are almost entirely composed of students, teachers, professional workers, etc. and have failed completely to win workers to their ranks, particularly in the London area. Lastly, the S.L.L. has been carrying out a policy of infiltration into the Communist Party and the Y.C.L. in a conscious attempt to disrupt our work; to the best of my knowledge it is the only Trotskyite group attempting this.

We must avoid, however, lumping the membership of the left-sectarian groups with the leadership; in many cases they are good revolutionaries who in other circumstances would be strong Communists. This is particularly true when the ultra-left have control of a Young Socialist or Labour Party Branch or Trade Union Branch, and have attracted a circle of followers. While the Trotskyite leadership is not genuinely interested in principled unity, many individuals who could be all too easily dismissed as "Trots" are willing to co-operate on issues, and will develop and learn through unity with our comrades.

I feel this question of unity will be more and more important in the months ahead, as a left opposition develops within the Labour Party to the right wing policies of the government. We will want to develop unity with Labour left-wingers calling for more progressive government policies, yet in the first instance many of the left-labour groups will be Trotskyite-led or under ultra-left influence. I feel that we should not refuse unity at a local level around issues with any working class organisation, trade union or Labour Party, but should ensure that such unity is not mis-used, and that our Party is in general given a say in organisation and policy equal to others. However, I fear that at the moment the greater danger facing us is that sectarianism in our approach will prevent fruitful unity, rather than that we will be tricked (as we occasionally will be) into supporting leftist or adventurist moves.

The political problems in fighting Trotskyism and other forms of left-sectarianism are little different from the general problems facing Communists. Over the past few years, there has been a definite shift in the line of attack of the Trotskyites on our party; while in the past their main attack was on the Soviet Union, today they are more likely to focus their attentions on the policies of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition. In winning support and understanding for these policies among our membership, and in addition achieving a correct and honest attitude to unity among all left forces, we will at the same time be combating left-sectarian ideology in the most effective way.

We must also increase and improve on the Marxist education of Party members, and particularly promote an atmosphere of free discussion and adventurous thinking within our movement, so that every time an unorthodox or peculiar idea, correct or incorrect, is put forward, members can discuss it with confidence.

We must begin to get a correct working relationship with Labour Party members, and an honest unity on issues. (In spite of frequent lip service at all levels to Labour-Communist unity, which in practice would expose the Trostkyites as left-sectarians with neither the interests of the Labour Party, Communist Party nor working class at heart, I have found in both London and Glasgow that the amount of actual co-operation is, with one or two notable exceptions based on the work of individuals, just about nil.)

Left-adventurists ("Trotskyites") will be with us as long as our Party remains relatively weak and the Labour Party strong; as long as it is at times a very uncomfortable thing to be a Communist but "respectable" to be "revolutionary but Labour"; and also, let's face it, as long as we don't succeed in giving the image to outsiders of a dynamic, active, theoretically educated and independent revolutionary Party. (We should be very foolish to ignore that we are still paying a very heavy price among the non-Communist left in the Labour movement for Stalinism and its not-completely-eradicated remains in socialist countries and within our own Party.) We should be prepared to answer the leftists politically and organisationally in terms of 1965, for they particularly attract young people, for whom the events of the 1920's are past history. Above all else, and in this I fully agree with Betty Reid, they will be beaten in practice, by our showing that Communist policies and leadership gives results for the working class and their policies do not.

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